HOW THE LITTLE ARK BAPTIST CHURCH CONDUCTS COMMUNITY MINISTRY: *BEYOND THESE SACRED WALLS*

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ABSTRACT

HOW THE LITTLE ARK BAPTIST CHURCH
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by

Michael Tyrone Bell

United Theological Seminary
Dayton, Ohio
1996

Mentor

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This project serves as a model for a rural church's implementation of community ministries. It documents the role of the pastor as the primary catalyst through preaching, administration, and pastoral care. These facets are used to lead a congregation beyond its reluctance to internal and external change. Once liberated, some members of the congregation are organized into ministry teams designed to meet specific needs. A strategic plan is developed to manage these ministry initiatives. This plan is derived from the contextual analysis, the assessment of the congregation and the mission statement of the church.

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Sincere thanks are extended to the following persons: Otis Moss, Jr., Thomas Dozeman, Samuel D. Proctor, June Marable, James Harris, Charles W. Green, J. Terry Wingate, Alfred A. Owens, Donald R. Deer for serving as mentors and consultants.

Thanks to "The Courage to Lead Group"; the best peers with whom this journey was shared.

Thanks to Pamela and Harold Jeffeson for their editorial recommendations and insisting that this project represents life in our community as a living documentary of ministry.

Thanks to Little Ark Baptist Church family for patience, prayers and allowing me the opportunity to serve them.

Thanks to Bernice C. Morris and Patricia Hardy for providing a refuge from the storms of daily activities and a quiet place to work.

Thanks to JoAnn Smith, Cheryl Stewart, Vaye Reeves and Janice Williams for clerical support.

Special thanks to my wife, E. Faith and our sons, Ray, Mike, and Israel for their patience and understanding with my absence at the table and recess. Only a family committed as you could feel the pain and know the joy of ministry. For you, I give God thanks.

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INTRODUCTION

Rural America has undergone significant changes in the last half of the twentieth century. In this last decade, it has been subjected to intense pressure to redefine itself. The inevitable changes in rural America are also visible in rural churches. In the midst of this turmoil and transition, rural churches should respond through relevant community ministries.

Since the early pioneering days of this country, the church has occupied a seat of prominence in many communities. A general knowledge of American history underscores the conspicuousness given to the church. After they built the homes and schools, tough hands and tender hearts built churches. Many of these churches built in the latter years of the nineteenth century are similar to the Little Ark Baptist Church in King George, Virginia. The similarities are stability, prominence, and the church's ability to serve as a guiding force in the lives of its parishioners and the community.

The question for the serious minded pastor is whether prominence, stability, and leadership are the result of a prophetic ministry. In other words, churches can become so engulfed in the tradition and the maintenance of the status quo, until they cease to model ministry after the principles of Jesus. Therefore, the church has an incredible opportunity and an overwhelming responsibility to conduct community ministries. If the rural church does not engage in community outreach, it hastens its own end. However if it wants to

conduct effective ministries, the rural church must overcome internal and external problems. This project shows how a rural church can be faithful to the mission as outlined in Matthew 28:19-20, and successfully move ministries beyond the walls of the sanctuary.

Although the working model of this project is in an African-American church, the design of the model transcends race and culture. The two ministries that will be addressed are examples of multi-cultural outreach ministries. They are the Singles' Ministry and the Brothers United Moving In The Spirit Ministry (B. U. M. S.); a mentoring program for young males. Other examples of community ministries currently in progress are:

Youth Summer Reading Program
Computer Literacy Training
Christian Men's Ministry
Senior Adult Ministry
Clothing Bank
Food Bank
Early Child Development Services

The primary catalyst to effect change and growth in a rural church, according to this model, is the servant-leader pastor. As a rule, rather than the exception, it is my belief that the servant-leader's role is central to outreach ministries. This is why this document reads as a pastor's journal documenting the joys and the pains of rural ministries. Using the authority of scripture and the invitation from the people to conduct ministries through preaching, administration, and pastoral care, the pastor executes a strategic plan which results in a community ministry.

An in-stage process by which the servant-leader motivates and manages ministry initiatives is outlined in each chapter. Chapter one contains the history of the church, a congregational assessment, and the contextual analysis to frame the church's mission. The purpose of the church is articulated in the mission statement.

Having a purpose is a good start, but the purpose alone is insufficient for a ministry. A good vision or picture that projects what success will look like is also necessary. In chapter two, the purpose is expanded into an articulation of the mission and vision. It deals with the barriers (social, psychological, and theological) to ministry beyond the sanctuary. Also included in this chapter are some helpful suggestions to simplify the management of a ministry. It is this chapter that unveils the need for intimacy between the servant-leader and the congregation. Without establishing unity within the church and developing servants to conduct ministries beyond the pastor, the program or plan will be defeated by the bureaucrats whose interests do not include ministry.

In chapter three, the project deals with the theological constructs of the servant-leader. It is my view that the servant-leader must be sure of what she or he believes. Without confidence about one's basic belief, the sermons may be eloquently proclaimed, but are dead upon delivery. The great challenge of this chapter is to connect, filter, adjust and develop a theological construct that unites people and leader into a partnership in ministry.

The strategic plan is presented in chapter four. This plan considers the components of the preceding chapters. Although the plan considers the components

discussed in the preceding chapters, we cannot exclude flexibility and prophetic intuition. What flexibility means, is that the persons involved in the achievement must have the power to be creative. What prophetic intuition means is that the servant-leader must have the humility to maintain a servant's attitude and the courage to speak, without compromise, the oracles of the Holy Eternal.

In chapter five is the implementation of the strategic plan, and chapter six is the conclusion. Chapter six will also provide some mistakes made along this journey. I am sharing my mistakes to save others who use this model of ministry, time and unnecessary frustration.

The aim of this project is to help persons giving leadership to the church, especially in rural contexts. The rural church is especially noted for bivocational clergy leadership, inequitable distribution of power, closed and narrow theological constructs and an agenda established for the perpetuation of tradition. While this may be true, it should be noted that a profitable ministry is possible in a rural church and community ministries are means of achievement. I am convinced that by establishing unity within the congregation and the community, ministries move beyond the sacred walls of the sanctuary.

Chapter One

Look Before You Leap

"...**Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make**

them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the

Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and

teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.

And I will be with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:19-20 TEV

In the Great Commission, the instructions of our Lord are clearly stated. The Lord's instructions, " . . . Go then, to all people . . . " provides a scriptural mandate to conduct a contextual analysis. A good understanding of one's context should include the following: demographic data, the history of the church, and an intuitive psychological profile of the parishioners. A careful observation of these areas contributes immeasurably to ministry.

Singularly, demographics, history, and the prevailing perceived psychological profiles of a context provide an overview of the arena of the ministry. Collectively, this information serves in the development of a mission statement. If the church already has a

written mission statement, then a critique of its performance should be done. If not, the mission statement should not be compiled without serious scrutiny of the context.

Usually the history of the church is available in the Clerk's file cabinet. Most of the information provided in this document was extracted from church bulletins. If you can't find this information, a good ice breaker with seniors is simply asking them to tell the story of the church and how they fit into the larger story of the life of their church. Whether or not you can learn the history of the church separate from the people, it must be understood, there is no separation of the average rural church from the story of its people.

In the rural context, the family story is a vital piece to one's ministry efforts. It is vital because the strong family connections that usually characterize rural congregations will affect ministry in many different ways. Whether the impact is perceived as positive or negative, depends on the openness of the servant-leader. A positive understanding of an undesirable situation is more beneficial because negativity fosters negativity. Rural communities, though noted for warmth and hospitality can be extremely private. When persons guard their privacy, they should be respected. However, the emphasis on privacy is often the result of the difficulty achieving privacy in small communities. Since a person's pain may be known by many people, respecting family is imperative for the servant-leader and above all, maintain confidentiality. Many parishioners will attempt to mask their pain behind a distant or superficial relationship with others. This will often leave the true family story untold.

If one does not assess the Sitz im Leben (life situation) of a particular context, it is the same as leaping into a situation before looking. Understanding the life situation of the Little Ark Baptist Church was easy for me because of my rural background. This is not to suggest that only an individual from the rural can serve a rural church. Credentials for service in a rural context are a combination of a call by the Holy and a church to conduct ministry and give leadership to it.

History of the Little Ark Baptist Church

(Much of this information is unedited because it was extracted from old program inserts and bulletins. It has been left as rendered to show pride and intentional emphasis of significant laity, whose families are still faithful servants.)

In the hills and mountains of Virginia, groups of people formed themselves into prayer bands. Interested and devout Christians carried on prayer meetings who, with the zeal of God, greatly wanted to see that His name be established in their settlements. These prayer bands laid the foundations for Negro churches everywhere.

During this time, the community only had the Antioch Baptist Church, known then as "Zion." Most of the people in the community had to walk fifteen miles to the church, which was a hardship. Then, a group started a successful prayer meeting in the settlement of Pumpkin Neck of King George County, Virginia. From there, two people decided to seek permission from Antioch (the Mother Church), to establish a new church in their community. Antioch Baptist granted the permission and Rev. John Fleming set them apart as a church of the Living God in the year 1876.

Sarah Neigh gave the name "Little Ark" to the church. The group of people decided to build their church on land purchased from George Dunlop. The land cost them $25.00 per acre. Several people worked tediously and diligently to lay the foundation for the new church. George Dunlop and David Johnson became known as the guides and shepherds for the church because of their relentless and untiring efforts.

In 1876, Rev. John Dunlop was called as the first pastor and served faithfully for three years. George Dunlop was the first to take the records of the church; and George Grimes, from Caroline County, became the first church clerk. Sisters Sarah Neigh and Lucy Dunlop gave the first Bible to the church in 1876.

In 1879, Rev. W. H. Hickerson became the second pastor of Little Ark. During his pastorate, a new church, which cost the congregation $800, was erected. The old church was used as a school. Fire destroyed the new church and another had to be built. During this time Little Ark continued to prosper.

Rev. Walter E. Porter, was called to Pastor, on January 1, 1913. Though not clearly reflected in the records, it appears that Rev. Porter served for five or six years.

Rev. Augustus Lewis, a graduate of Howard University School of Religion in 1919, began his pastorate in 1918 and continued for five or six years until he was called to the First Baptist Church, Rosslyn, Virginia.

Rev. George Carter under whom they built another "Little Ark," began ministry and service to the church in 1924 or 1925. It appears that Rev. George Carter served for at least twenty-five years. He was noted for preaching with conviction and charisma. While serving two Sundays at Little Ark, he served four other churches.

In 1951, the members called Dr. John W. Chapman as Assistant Pastor to Rev. Carter. He served in this capacity for fourteen months. Rev. Carter, Dr. Chapman's father in the ministry introduced him to Little Ark. Dr. John W. Chapman became pastor on July 9, 1952 after the death of Rev. Carter. Under the leadership of Dr. Chapman, Little Ark Baptist Church improved administratively and gained in membership. Within two years the church took in more than seventy-five persons. They projected and organized the vision of renovating the church. The project cost $86,000. Additionally, Dr. Chapman influenced the purchasing of twenty more acres of property. He was a man of integrity and perhaps, ahead of his time. People in the surrounding counties knew him as a preacher without a peer. By the light of the gospel, he followed the footsteps left to him by the pioneers of the faith. This concludes the historical information that was gathered from bulletins and progam inserts.

In reviewing the previous pastors' assignments to Little Ark, it is discernable that this church has a history of retaining pastors. This is not to be interpreted as supporting leadership. In any context, retaining pastors and supporting pastoral leadership aren't congruent. However, the history suggested that the people of this church were not only a proud people, but they also were proud of their leaders. Another significant point from this information is that this congregation had become independent of servant-leader directives. In other words, others addressed their ministry needs during the week; perhaps deacons or community elders.

When a congregation has a history of pastors who weren't empowered to influence or direct their church program, it takes time before their trust and confidence is

granted to a new servant-leader pastor. During this adjustment period, it is my conviction that compassion is stronger than charisma and trust is earned through showing love and not given because of one's charisma.

In this community, Little Ark is the only African-American church with this record. For example, the Antioch Baptist Church is the mother church of Ark and yet, Antioch averages a new minister every two or three years. This also addresses and undergirds why this church should provide community oriented ministries. Not only is Ark considered the most affluent, but also is apparently stable. These are the reasons that many members told me immediately that this church is the leading church in the community. My ignorant response to what I thought was their arrogance and inflated egos were - leading in what? In fact, I used this issue to foster growth and spiritual development. If we are to be a leading church in this community, let us lead men and women to community. The intent is to effect a covenant community where a healing ministry meets human needs.

Assessing the Congregation

It is imperative that the observation period considers more than historical reflections and reviews. While knowing where an organization has been to decide where it is likely to go is helpful, it is also essential to know the present condition. Is the organization morally and mentally fit to pursue ministry initiatives beyond its maintenance requirements? Does the membership record remotely exhibits a 50 - 70 percent attendance during main worship? Also, noting the composition of the

congregation is advisable; age, employment, education, period of membership and family ties. By assessing this information, a sense of devotion and an idea of whether needs are being ministered to may be concluded. This data will factor in the overall psychological and social norms which affect ministry initiatives. If the assessment of the congregation shows a large population of seniors, it does not mean that ministry can't be done. We need to remind ourselves that seniors provide a pool of volunteers. It is helpful to the church and its seniors if they are engaged in a meaningful ministry.

In Little Ark, about 20 percent of the congregation is older than sixty-five. There are twenty-four persons over seventy, about thirteen more than eighty and about five are close to ninety. Therefore, understanding their reluctance to change was necessary and fear of debt because of their socialization process. However, this group of persons is often much more financially sound than younger adults. This created a leadership challenge. I considered the challenge, a spiritual and moral challenge instead of trying to discover some method to move them emotionally.

Examples like these are in most rural congregations. I think the key is, that the servant-leader has to look for them as oppose to concluding that a rural assignment is a Patmos experience.

Contextual Analysis

In this model, the contextual analysis is vital to a ministry because of its impact upon the planning and implementation of community ministries. An assessment of the environment, the population, employment opportunities, life support systems and more,

allows the servant-leader to observe obvious community needs.

Although, the contextual analysis refers to the environment, it is not a casual drive through the community. It is an in-depth look at how local people assign values to their life support systems. For example, if people live in a community where there are ten liquor stores and one supermarket, this makes a statement about the community and its values. The public schools, apartment complexes, the general housing conditions, general community cleanliness, supermarkets, the churches, highways, and recreational opportunities provide information about the context. There are other areas of the external environment that one may choose to factor.

Each community will display its values and simultaneously, provide an overview of its agenda. By carefully processing this data, challenges to ministry initiatives may be anticipated. Additionally, a psychological and sociological profile will begin to form a prevailing view. Obviously, psychological and sociological profiles should not be conclusively based upon only a contextual analysis, neither should these implications be dismissed.

The following subtopics are an example of the contextual analysis and the history of King George County, Virginia:

External Environment

The community profile was prepared by the King George County Office and published by the Virginia Power Company. This information is based on the 1990 census and survey information. Data was updated where accessible with the 1995 report.

Location and History

King George County is bounded on the north by the Potomac River and on the south by the Rappahannock River. The county was formed from Richmond County in 1720 and renamed in honor of King George I. King George is within Virginia's fastest growing region, midway between Washington, D.C. and the state capital of Richmond.

It is considered a legendary place, which bridges the colonial past with the high-tech future. A home of bald eagles and headquarters to the Naval Surface Warfare Center, King George County is diversity at its best. Strategically situated within a ninety-minute drive of Washington, D.C., Baltimore, MD, and Richmond, VA, King George County offers a positive business climate conducive to prosperity and expansion. Companies that best suit these areas are those that require a special mix: an educated and highly motivated work force, a positive business climate, proximity to year-round recreational and cultural activities, a commitment to excellence in education and a quality of life that is renowned.

Topography

Acreage	112,640
Square Miles	183
Physiography	Coastal Plain
Topography	Flat to gently rolling
Elevations	Sea level to 200+ feet
Drainage	Potomac, Rappahannock

Climate

Annual average rainfall	40 in.
Annual average snowfall	16 in.
Annual average temperature	56.2
January average	38
July average	74
Average heating degree days	4224
Average cooling degree days	1491
Prevailing winds	WNW

Population

1995 provisional estimate	15,900

Median Age is 31.1 years

Neighborhood Data

The church neighborhood is known as Owens. A mix of single family homes in and out of subdivisions, town houses, apartments, and a mix of commercial businesses, including offices of major department of defense contractors, is the balance of the improvements in the general neighborhood. The immediate neighborhood is predominantly rural in character, with other proximate uses including a strip shopping center serving the Dahlgren area of King George County located approximately one mile east of the church. The neighborhood boundary is indistinct, with the services provided

by businesses found there being available to the entire County and neighboring jurisdictions including Colonial Beach in Westmoreland County. Water supply for the area generally comes from public and private wells and community water systems. No public sewer is currently available in the immediate area. Local public transportation is limited to public school buses that is typical for rural areas. Commuters to the employment centers in and out of the County typically use Routes 3, 301, 205 and 206 for access.

The church property is surrounded by agriculturally zoned property, with nearby uses including convenience market and restaurant, offices, single family residential and agriculture. King George County provides public schools and a volunteer fire department and rescue squad that serves the neighborhood. The population of the general neighborhood is estimated at approximately 15,900 persons, with this number increasing to some 50,000 during normal working hours.

Typical homes are of frame construction ranging from 900 to 2,000+ Square feet (SF) in size, and from new to 100+ years of age. The predominant single family home value range in the subject area is $80,000 to $100,000. Typical construction in the area is of masonry, frame or prefabricated metal, and of fair to good quality. Properties surrounding the area are owner-occupied. Rezoning requests to allow higher intensity uses occur occasionally, with no certainty of being granted pursuant to the public hearing process that can take two to twelve months.

Economy

Local economic activity as measured by retail sales has grown from $15.5 million in 1980 to $43 million in 1990, up 95% from 1980 representing a 36% increase in real dollars. Assessed value of taxable real estate for 1990 is $463 million. The market value of agricultural products sold in 1990 was an estimated $3 million with corn, soybeans, wheat and beef cattle being the major agricultural components of the County.

Employment

The primary employment sectors in King George County are federal civilian government, services, trade and manufacturing. The major employer is the Naval Surface Warfare Center (NAVSWC), which provides employment for more than 3,000 civilian personnel. Besides the base operations of NAVSWC, the Naval Space Surveillance Center, Naval Space Command, and the Aegis Training Center have helped in attracting more than eighty tech software engineering firms to the County. Average weekly salary in King George County for 1990 was $535. As of December 1990, the total civilian labor force within the County stood at 7,448, with an average unemployment rate of 4.6% for 1990.

Employment by manufacturing and nonmanufacturing segments (4th Qtr 1990) estimates that the total labor force was 165,000. Virginia is a right-to-work state. Several state and local programs are available to help business expansion within the region.

Community Facilities

Churches - 24 Protestant churches and one Catholic Church

Lodging - Three motels with a total of 95 rooms

Recreation - four swimming pools, 10 tennis courts, six ball fields, one multi-purpose field, basketball courts, golf courses, two pavilions with picnic tables to adapt to 100 persons each.

King George Citizen Center - 10,000 square feet multipurpose community center available for meetings, senior citizen activities, dances and recreational programs.

Athletics - Adult and youth year-round programs include: basketball, soccer, football, gymnastics, volleyball, sports camps, aerobics, karate, and dance instruction.

Parks - Two state parks, Caledon Natural Area (2,579 acres) provides a spectacular bald eagle nesting area. Lands End Wildlife Preserve (430 acres) provides a Canadian geese refuge. There are also two local parks; Barnes field (165 acres with facilities) and Wayside (10 passive acres).

Accessibility to both the Potomac and the Rappahannock Rivers provide endless opportunity for water sports. Major amusement parks include Kings Dominion (within 30 minutes), Busch Gardens and Water County U.S.A. (within two hours).

Medical

Mary Washington Hospital in Fredericksburg (18 miles) is a 340 beds, full service and acute care facility that provides the latest in medical technology. The Dahlgren Rescue Squad and the Clare Ambulance Service are the two emergency medical transport services available in King George County. There are three local clinics and a state licensed nursing home (Heritage Hall, 130 beds). Five doctors and two dentists have practices in King George. The Public Health Department offers immunizations, pediatric and orthopedic services and pregnancy tests. The department also does soil studies, tests water samples as part of its clinical/environmental programs, and issues sewerage disposal permits.

Education

Institutes of Post-Secondary Education Serving the King George County Area:

Community Colleges - Rappahannock Community College, which offers classes in the County, Germanna Community College, Northern Virginia Community College and J. Sergeant Reynolds Community College.

College - Mary Washington College, in Fredericksburg offers both undergraduate and graduate studies.

Universities - George Mason University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia Union University and the University of Richmond.

Finance

There are three banks in King George; King George State Bank, and two branches of First Virginia Bank. Bank assets range from $39 million to $2.2 billion. NAVSWC provides a credit union with assets over $60 million. King George County offers an Industrial Development Authority to issue revenue bonds. The county also participates in the Rappahannock Economic Development Corporation, a Small Business Administration 504 loan program.

Emergency Services

The 911 system serves King George County. The King George Sheriff's Department which employs 14 sworn deputies provides protection. They assign six State Police officers to the area. Two volunteer fire departments that operate from three stations serve the County. The Dahlgren Volunteer Rescue Squad has 36 trained medial personnel including paramedic, cardiac, and emergency medical technicians.

Communications

For such a small area, King George County residents have access to two newspapers: The Free Lance Star, Fredericksburg (afternoon daily) and The Journal, King George (weekly). Residents receive three local radio stations: WFVA/WBQB AM-FM; WFLS AM-FM; WGRQ FM, as well as transmissions from Washington and Richmond stations. King George Cablevision provides 32 channels and there is receipt of local and major networks.

Government

King George County is governed by an elected five-member Board of Supervisors, with a County Administrator serving as the manager for day-to-day operations of the government. The county offices and courts are centrally located at the King George Courthouse. The county has adopted a comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance, a subdivision ordinance and offers conditional zoning procedures.

Internal Environment

The internal environment is provided a general information concerning the church. This information serves as a tool to evaluate physical growth potential. What is not covered in this section is the financial data. This data is used in conjunction with the external environmental in order to provide the congregation and the servant-leader with an approach to improve the church's physical structure.

In a community like King George, Virginia, it is not unusual for a church to have only a beautiful sanctuary and a fellowship hall. In many cases, the fellowship hall is a small area to dine after funerals or festival days. This was exactly the makeup of Little Ark before adding an educational annex and a multipurpose area.

One hindrance to vibrant ministries in rural churches and communities is a lack of space to offer people opportunities to develop beyond Sunday worship. Since it is the vision of Little Ark to offer daily activities, the sanctuary capacity was limited to 450 person occupancies. The major impact was in the additional classrooms, nursery, the facilities for Day Care.

Area and Site Information

Little Ark is on Route 624, one mile north of Route 206, near Owens in King George County, Virginia. The church only uses approximately 25% of the 21 acres. The church ground includes a private cemetery, an artesian well and septic tank system, but uses public commercial power lines and telephone services.

The main sanctuary is approximately 3,800 square feet, one story brick structure with cathedral ceilings and 3,640 square foot basement. There is good quality construction throughout, with no evidence of deferred maintenance. A new addition (educational annex) was completed in 1994. This facility includes approximately 3,888 square feet one story brick structure building with 3,436 square foot, full finished basement. Elevator access was included as part of the building improvements. Now, a graveled parking area for 148 vehicles is in place and adequate space is available on the site for additional parking area off-street, as required.

Site Value

The Market Data or Direct Sales Comparison Approach traditionally values improved property, the Income Approach and the Cost Approach. The Sales Comparison Approach attempts to make a direct comparison of the subject property with the sales of similar parcels that they similarly zone. Valuation as reported by the Cost Approach is based on the Market Data Approach. They extracted information for valuation of the site from sales most similar in the opinion of the appraiser and reported as an unimproved site value. The Income Approach could not be applied due to lack of information required for

analysis based on that approach. The Cost Approach is relied on as the most accurate indicator due to the unique nature of the subject property and the inadequacy of available information to support any meaningful application of the other traditional approaches to value.

Cost Approach

1. 3,800 SF Cathedral Main Building, Institutional Use @ $68.00/SF $258,400.00
2. 3,888 SF Addition, As stated, @ $68.00/SF $264,384.00
3. 3,640 SF Existing Basement @ $28.00/SF $101,920.00
4. 3,436 SF Addition Basement @ $16.00/SF $54,976.00
5. Elevator Access $89,500.00
6. Existing Parking and Proposed Parking Areas, Well, Septic $73,400.00

Removable Personalty Not Valued; calculations rounded.

Subtotal:	$842.580.00

Depreciation

Physical-Existing (8%)	($67,406.00)
Functional (0%)	(-0-)
External (2%)	($16,852.00)
Subtotal:	($84,258.00)

Depreciated Improvement Value:	$758,322.00
Estimated Vacant Site Value:	$ 90,000.00

Indicated Value by Cost Approach:	$848,322.00

The Mission Statement

The mission statement is simply a statement of the purpose of the church. What is the reason for its existence? Without a mission statement, the traditional views become the driving and guiding forces that direct the church. If the tradition of the church is fulfilling the Great Commission, that is wonderful. However, I don't think that the agendas of most of churches, especially in the rural areas are concerned with making disciples of all nations. Therefore, constructing a mission statement is imperative.

It is my recommendation that the mission statement be developed in concert with the laity. The more input persons have in planning, the more ownership they feel in the process and commitment to the end-product. Yet, there are times when the laity are not informed or may not be available or amenable. The mission statement is such a vital piece to productive ministry. It is worth the struggle to create a way to get one into print and into practice.

If the servant-leader has to design the mission statement without the assistance of other key personnel, it is advisable that the statement is short, simple and easy to be remembered. The mission statement must not read like a sermon, but it must state the message of ministry based upon the model demonstrated in Jesus.

This is the mission statement of the Little Ark Baptist Church:

Little Ark Baptist Church

is a body of Christians whose primary

mission is to glorify God through the making

of disciples who will love, support and nurture each other;

provide compassionate service to the community; and evangelize the lost and

develop them into self-reproducing disciples.

CHAPTER TWO

The Challenges To Rural Community Ministries

"...Go, then, to all peoples **everywhere** and make
them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the
Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and
teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.
And I will be with you always, to the end of the age."
Matthew 28:19-20 TEV

The word **everywhere** is in bold because often, congregation does not cause the greatest challenges in the rural church, the limited resources, the tradition or a host of other reasons. The primary reason may be the person presented in this project as the primary catalyst to a community ministry -- the servant-leader. If the pastor has the opinion that rural ministries are impotent and insignificant, then he or she will seek to validate this view. The Great Commission underscores that the mission of making disciples also includes the rural communities.

What are some reasons or myths clergy may pose for not expecting much in the rural? Likely responses are "Rural areas are fraught with limited resources, small

populations, persons lacking the talent to help in creating vibrant viable worship services, and more." Two reasons given by a former rural pastor who participated in my context were "Rural churches seldom afford a decent salary for their minister" and "It is too difficult to have any real leadership authority." Perhaps without an apology for his view, my colleague may have been correct. I share this information to emphasize that the greatest obstacle or challenge to a rural church's conduct of ministries can be the servant-leader. This does not reduce the concerns for health, welfare or clergy quality of life. However, it is imperative that one determines whether one has an authentic sense of call for the challenges of a rural ministry.

While all of the above may be true, in my experience, there are many opportunities to reach people up close and personal in the name of Jesus Christ. Some challenges to rural ministries will be elaborated in the section, *Barriers to Community,* later in this chapter.

Reasons for Community Ministries

What is a community ministry? A community ministry, as in "the community ministry movement," possesses three vital and energizing characteristics: It is congregation-based and very local, covering as small an area as is practicable. It is a social ministry that sees the issues through the prism of its own community. It is

ecumenical, interfaith, or both.[1] Every facet of life depends on the concerted efforts of entities beyond the self or the individual to sustain life for the whole.

Therefore, a congregation-based community ministry initiative capitalizes on the need for people to feel needed, wanted, and affirmed. In rural communities, the memories of struggle for survival and shared pain are still topics of discussion among persons in their late thirties and older. As indicated earlier, the age of this congregation and the cultural bonds are fortified because of community interconnectedness. Because of the interconnectedness, the Salem Baptist Church supports the young male mentor ship program (Brothers United Moving in the Spirit). The interconnectedness results from members of this church having spouses or other relatives in key leadership positions in Little Ark and Salem.

The resources of two congregations are better than one. This is a key idea in A. David Bos', A Practical Guide to Community Ministry. Not only is there the financial support, but there is the people support. The leaders of and within the churches also serve as leaders in a community ministry. The director of the young male mentoring program is a member of Salem Baptist Church. As a former resident of King George County, Virginia, he continues actively to participate within his community. His insight and managerial skills, enhance his ability to work with men and young males. However, it is his ability to link community needs with the vast resources of philanthropic organization that has caused this ministry to receive accolades from around the county. All across the

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[1]A. David Bos, A Practical Guide to Community Ministry (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 2. A.

country, citizens are fearful of young African-American men. Although, these young men are considered as a threat to society, they often respond to caring relationships. The B. U. M. S. program offers religious principles through nurturing relationships. I cite this to underscore the second part of Bos' emphasis on social ministry.

Rural churches tend to be guarded and governed by an ultra conservative view of differing faiths. A. David Bos does not address the difficulty of the average rural community's engagement in interfaith relationships. It may be more prevalent in King George, but many rural areas will join with other denominations much quicker than with other faiths. Again, this is probably due to the limited tolerance and lack of education of the clergy serving rural churches. Often the resistance or restrictions of congregations result from the religious leader's insecurities, rather than the congregation. It is the servant-leader's responsibility to educate, sensitize and equip persons for ministries. This responsibility must be seriously taken. It is difficult to educate and sensitize a congregation if the pastor is lacking. When this is the case, it is published in bold print in the community's grapevine.

In rural communities where most people are acquaintances or distant relatives, commenting about the strengths and weaknesses of their pastors is common for them. One area that receives much conversation and hinders the fellowship among churches is the petty jealousy among clergy. When these tensions exist, the laity may recognize persons requiring ministry before their pastor does. The clergy might see a community ministry as a breakthrough for the laity, because before the onset of our movement even the more ecumenically minded clergy tended to take a proprietary attitude toward

anything having to do with relationships between churches.[2] When the clergy fosters a type of protective isolation among the laity, valuable resources to ministry remain untouched. But, when one is secure enough to bring people together, not only does the leader grow, the congregants have their fears abated and their faith fortified. It comes to them as a constituent part of each congregation.[3]

Each congregation participating in a community ministry experiences growth. A revived sense of oneness in the struggle to conquer alienation and estrangement from the Holy Eternal is one result. The spiritual development that takes place within the secret chambers of individual members determines the growth of a church. From this new awareness, the fountains of energy and zeal to do more ministry flow through the community.

After serving Little Ark for several years, I decided that reaching the community was imperative. We were not experiencing the growth and the spiritual happiness that result from a congregation's effort to do ministries beyond the sacred walls of the sanctuary. Under this conviction, the biblical basis of community was adopted as curricula.

What does the Bible say about community ministries? Community according to the Old Testament was obviously in the mind of God. In formulating a plan for a community ministry besides the Bible, I used Paul Hanson's book The People Called and

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[2]Ibid., 34

[3]Ibid., 61.

several other texts, emphasizing community. A comparison was made between the teachings of the biblical text and textbooks with the experiences of our daily lives. This was extremely helpful in creating congregational unity. Some members evidenced the healing of old wounds that had continued taking away from their spiritual vitality for years. The message of community and the benefits were shared through sermons and pastoral comments in the church's newsletter. At every opportunity, community was lifted with emphasis as a divine call to the church.

What life have you if you have not life together? There is no life that is not in community, and no community not lived in praise of God.[4]

> The Hebrew word salom is commonly translated "peace," which captures only an approximate and partial meaning. Salom describes the cosmic harmony that exists where the world and all its inhabitants are reconciled with God. Israel described this state with its concept of covenant; that is, the bond of fellowship within which "I (Yahweh) shall be your God and you shall be my people." The qualities of the community living in harmony with God in covenant are variously described as prosperity, peace and righteousness, which taken together begin to describe salom.[5]

The spirit of community ushers in a harmony that evidences Christ. It is this kind of peace that occurs within the covenant community when the focus is upon a ministry. I used examples of community from other views, such as winos standing shoulder to shoulder passing their bottle. I used simple illustrations which were easily understood.

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[4]Paul D. Hanson, The People Called (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1986.), 3.

[5]Ibid., 3.

Who wants to attend a church where Jesus is not welcome to put in an occasional appearance? The "for members only" stances of some churches have precluded the possibilities for growth, since only the "initiated" can participate. Only those, who look, act, and smell "like us" are encouraged to belong.[6] Within the ranks of some nurturing, caring and giving people, they may display a coldness. In rural communities, where people may be aware of the former lifestyles of certain members, perhaps some succumb to the temptation of self-righteousness. Some members behave as if they think themselves to be centurions on duty to guard the sanctuary and admit only a certain clientele. This is a destructive pattern, but I have to admit, I have seen it surface in this church. If this attitude taints the atmosphere of the church, it strangles the living breath in a community ministry initiative. Therefore, the servant-leader and other laity must see it as their duty to remind all parties of our inherent flaws caused by original sin.

Before the church can reach the under served persons of the community, the church must meet the needs of its constituency. Additionally, the church must be willing to reach out and touch the lives of the lost before they come to worship. In a rural setting, people are ready to support their own. While this is good, it must be understood that the God of the sacred text descends to defend the left out and the lost. The familiar phrase says, "God will help those who help themselves." While this is acceptable, it is also truth to say, "God will help those who cannot help themselves."

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[6]Carlyle Fielding Stewart III, African American Church Growth (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 132.

It is in Exodus 15 that the notion of community under the leadership of Yahweh comes to the forefront and center stage in the drama of the Divine human encounter. It is in Exodus that a decisive failure of human efforts to liberate the slaves led to the entry of Yahweh. I think, earlier in the third chapter, the burning bush experience of Moses and the fact that God gives a name to Moses suggests that Israel's God was a personable God. Based upon this premise, the community had a God who had become their salvation. A God active and involved in their history, which gives victory and deliverance to the community. Therefore, to be in community with Israel was to be in company with Israel's God. In the ancient world, knowing God by name was a major accomplishment. Thus, a new notion of community was born with the exodus.

In the African-American Church, whatever denomination, the Old Testament story of Moses is very popular. The average child attending church school can tell this episode with startling accuracy. In the folk tradition preaching which permeates urban and rural church alike, the exodus story is interpreted as a metaphor for our freedom and freedom in this sense is the same as community. African griots have bequeathed to African-Americans the art of the story. In this sense, Israel's journey becomes the journey of all oppressed people.

The Old Testament presents this same drama in other texts. The congruent issues are one can interpret themselves as people called by God. Now in a community of freed slaves within which the pyramid of social stratifications which consigns certain classes to

lives of ease and others to relentless sufferings and deprivation was to be banned forever.[7] Dr. Howard Thurman said, ". . . as in Genesis, community (wholeness) is given to illustrate the intent of the Creator in creation. It is as if a model of community is provided that man might know the meaning of life. He has the potential that may be actualized in him as the fulfillment of the intent of the Creator."[8]

Barriers to Community

What are the barriers to moving ministry beyond the sanctuary? What things hinder or impede the ministry? What kind of actions by the preacher will swiftly erode his or her capacity to influence the commonwealth? These questions introduce potential barriers to conducting a community ministry. A servant leader who takes pride in their role as a catalyst for change within their socio-political context must have a yearning to be a general practitioner for the ills of a local congregation. In this case, congregation is not confined to one's assignment as minister in a local church, but the entire community is considered as the congregation.

In rural areas, economical, educational, sexism, ageism, and race barriers, tend to be more pronounced in urban areas. Small conservative bureaucracies which control policies and influence the justice systems, sustain these impositions against humanity.

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[7]Paul D. Hanson, The People Called (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1986.), 23.

[8]Howard Thurman, The Search for Common Ground (Richmond: Friends United Press, 1986), 23.

Since these barriers are entrenched and often, unchallenged by the community leaders, they are accepted as normative in rural living.

How are community ministries affected by the barriers previously noted? Economically, rural churches often do not have the wealth within the congregation to engage in major ministry efforts. For those congregations which have wealthy congregants, the servant-leader has the challenge of convincing people to support social programs. However, the money is a secondary barrier. First is a lack of mentality. Furthermore, one could argue that the reason for lack of support of a community ministry is neither money nor mentality. It is a moral challenge for the leadership to convict congregations accept negligence to a ministry is a moral problem. Again, this is directly connected to the Great Commission.

Educationally, rural churches, while commending and motivating its membership to pursue higher education, once educated, many members migrate to the cities. This leaves the rural churches as catalyst and motivator but seldom the recipient of its ministry efforts.

Racism, ageism and sexism are so closely connected, discerning where one start is difficult or stops and the other evil begins. In rural communities, the older and more settled members of a congregation must be lead, with compassion, to accept diversity and tolerance. As barriers to community ministries, these three could be considered as an evil trinity. In Little Ark Baptist Church, it is the expressed policy and practice to seek the higher ethical plane and discharge ministries without regard of race, age or sex.

The prophetic pulpit can and should address issues which hinder community. If the preacher is too silent and weak, the congregation may or may not hear the biblical mandate to move beyond barriers.

> The preacher is called to weave an artistic connection between the text in its elusive, liberated truth, and the congregation in its propensity to hear the text in forms of reductionism. That task requires articulation of a great truth in the text that may be unnoticed reality in the congregation -- unnoticed, or noticed and rejected, or routinized. Preaching makes it possible for something that has been closed to be powerfully disclosed. My concern here is with the powerful reality of guilt and the more powerful reality of healing. The artistry of the preacher must disclose both the power of guilt and of healing, and then lead the congregation through the delicate transaction whereby healing overcomes and overrides guilt.[9]

The legacy of racism, sexism and ageism has clouded the horizons of hope for a better life where community is a reality. In Little Ark, I became aware of the destructive guilt and anger that pervaded the congregation. Although they did not voice this guilt and rage, the effects had ways of being played out, even in Sunday worship. It is imperative for the servant-leaders to search the scriptures for sermonic substance that not only soothes the hurt and pain, but leads to healing. When people are led from guilt to grace, from hurt to human harmony, liberation is expressed in unity within the congregation.

Since the Little Ark Baptist Church is composed of persons from opposite ends of the spectrums of society, pulling people together was priority. When people do not really trust enough totally to ventilate, but are hurting so badly that they can no longer

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[9]Ibid., 13.

remain silent, they need a friend and not a judge. Choosing to meet the needs of human pain shaped our efforts toward transforming groups, clubs, boards, cliques, into a fellowship circle beyond the Sunday settings. We organized trips to various places, especially for the women who needed to experience other lifestyles and forms. Every activity provided an opportunity to share from the scriptures. I will never forget the warm and bright smiles of persons living within a five-mile radius of each other, who have for years assumed that they could never get over petty jealousies conceived in elementary, junior high and high school days. Obviously, anyone well acquainted with life would understand that some obstacles and impediments to fellowship ran deeper than simple petty issues. Without being redundant, there is a major benefit in proclaiming the liberating words of scripture. One benefit of getting the people outside the familiar scenes of their sanctuary was to violate the territorial turfs upon which they stake their claims within the church.

In rural churches and I suppose urban counterparts, we condition people to feel that they can only sit in a certain section or they have taken ownership of a particular pew. So when they come to church the major concern may very well be, "Is anybody in my seat?" or "Why is he sitting next to me?" Under these conditions, just how much gospel is being heard? The choir may be singing Amazing Grace and someone's mind is saying, "I'm going to git you sucker." As Walter Brueggemann says, "What began as news in the gospel is easily assumed, slotted, and conveniently dismissed. We depart

having heard, but without noticing the urge to transformation that is not readily capable without comfortable believing that asks little and receives less."[10]

This gives new understanding to the reason for preaching sermon series. Certain themes must address the pain. I like to use the example of the patient physician relationship. When a person gets an appointment to see his or her family physician they anxiously await the arrival of that date. When they get to the doctor's office, go through the necessary prescreening and the doctor shows up, at that point, exchange does not end but begins. The physician wants to know your symptom. Sometimes, persons may find themselves en route to the local drugstore for a prescribed drug without ever having been fully examined or undressed. In similar fashion, the sermon does not have to undress people nor expose their private parts, to prescribe the proper measurements of mercy or the grace needed. If healing does not take place within a congregation that is obviously fractured, the congregation will demonstrate the attitude that is counterproductive for growth or ministry. It will hinder ministry within the congregation and lock the doors of the church where others will not want to be a part. The servant leader may become the scapegoat instead of a high priest.

Teaching For Growth

Since parishioners see and hear so much through televangelism and media hype, some faithful servant-leader faces the challenge of teaching truths which may be

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[10]Walter Brueggemann, Finally Comes the Poet (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989), 1.

unpalatable. I have had members to purchase booklets from some famous televangelists and demand that this material become the curricula for Christian Education. I am aware that this is familiar in most contexts. Also, many of us are waving and swooning to the rhythm of what is popular. My personal caution is--what is popular may not be prophetic. Therefore, in the church, servant-leaders must focus on the big giant of Christian education. I used this terminology because, in my experience, one of the most difficult and neglected areas in the local church is a good Christian education program. In trying to remedy this condition, I would like also to share some helpful hints that may save time in this endeavor.

Initially, my techniques used during the midweek Bible study sessions were probably too technical in nature. If the pastor is too technical without explaining or simplifying, a barrier is established. I remember, after about 18 months of study, announcing that instead of purchasing an extra text, I wanted the congregation to concentrate on the scriptures, and I would provide some extra biblical insights. To my surprise, a woman said, "I wish you had done this two years earlier." Without realizing it, I had built a barrier between myself and a senior. In a later chapter, I will suggest some sermonic styles, without compromise of content, that may help remove barriers of this nature. Still, the people were kind, and besides, they were summonses to study.

All occupations update, rethink, retool and advance other methods that are better, faster, sharper and smarter to enhance productivity. Ministry and pastoral care should not exempt or exclude. Yet, in many African American churches, especially in rural contexts, their proximity to fervent fundamentalism often fuels narrow theological

constructs, but rarely motivates a desire for sacred study. The C. I. Scofield King James Version, as the only Holy Bible mentality, validates the size of this challenge to update, broaden, enlighten and illumine. It is in this phase that the mistakes made are not earth shattering. In making the scriptures relevant, we discussed biblical issues of race, class and community. Troubling Biblical Waters, Cain H. Felder, Ph.D., was referenced along with the excerpts provided from Paul D. Hanson's, The People Called. This was a terrible mistake, in that I assumed people were much farther in their grasps of the scriptures. The people were kind and merciful, and to date, quite in touch with the various methods of biblical criticism. We frequently invited instructors and professors from Virginia Union University's School of Theology for lectures and sermons. I was simply introducing, as best I knew, the Bible. From these early fumbles, we have grown together as the people of God.

> New pastors are often uncomfortable in rural surroundings, even though some may have been raised in rural communities. Their college and seminary education has opened new worlds to them and distanced them from the values and opinions found in rural communities. Their theological beliefs and political opinions have often changed. Pastors learn to enjoy many of the things urban communities offer, such as movies, concerts and plays, professional sports, convenience stores, and shopping malls. When they and their families move to rural communities, they experience a culture shock that is as significant as if they had moved to a foreign country. This cultural distance between pastors and congregational members hinders ministry and encourages short pastorates.[11]

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[11]Kevin E. Ruffcorn, Rural Evangelism (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1994), 36.

As indicated earlier in chapter One, Little Ark Baptist Church does not have a history of short pastorates. Therefore, I would suggest those incoming pastors, in rural settings similar to this, to understand the gap fully that may exist in their world view as opposed to that of their congregants. While this might present a challenge, it also presents an opportunity for growth. The pastor does himself a disservice to assume that only the congregation has to grow. He must grow as well.

The role of the servant-leader in framing or giving shape to the community's faith belief systems within the congregation is key in this model. If the leader does not gain the confidence of the congregation, they may tolerate a partial acquaintance or grace period. Nevertheless, we should not expect this to continue beyond 18 months. After 18 months, the pastor may not feel that the church community is following his or her leadership. Nonetheless, while the pastors are critiquing and assessing the congregation, notes are being kept on them too.

Since it is the objective of a pastoral leadership and prophetic ministry to call the people of God to worship and focus attention on the Christ of faith, we must not violate the Sunday morning contract. The preacher has the unique responsibility to stand tall in the midst of our moral confusion, our spiritual estrangement, and our lost opportunities to declare that God is with us in our situation.[12] Every Sunday morning, the servant-leader has an opportunity to stand and state his claim. While the preacher is articulating his faith posture, we must shoulder the responsibility of preaching with grave intentionality.

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[12]Samuel D. Proctor, Preaching about Crises in the Community (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988), 11.

If the sermon addresses the needs of people, and we exhibit the pastoral care role after the Sunday morning sermon, be assured the membership will celebrate their faith and be thankful to God for your leadership.

In situations where a congregation may not have experienced intentionality in preaching and pastoral care, the response may be frightening. People everywhere long for acceptance and appreciation. The human spirit cannot abide the enforced loneliness of isolation. We literally feed on each other; where this nourishment is not available, the human spirit and the human body -- both -- sicken and die.[13] The church community should therefore be affirming people, not rejecting anyone. It is the very essence of the church to be an equal opportunity institution, because it should reflect the nature of Jesus Christ. As Dr. Thurman states that the human spirit cannot abide the enforced loneliness of isolation, one first impulses of a new pastor would be to withdraw from the congregation and retreat into seclusion. If the pastor does not model the fervent fires of conviction concerning his or her own ministry, it is unlikely that the congregation will take his role seriously. For the rural minister to gain the confidence of his or her congregation, he or she must show community within his own spirit. The man, who seeks community within his own spirit, who searches for it in his experiences with the literal facts of the external world, and who makes this his formal intent as he seeks to

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[13]Howard Thurman, The Search for Common Ground (Richmond: Friends United Press, 1986), 3.

bring order to the chaos of his collective life, is not going against life but will be sustained and supported by life.[29]

I also listened to nonmembers to acquaint myself with the views of persons who would occasionally visit but never seek membership. I observed people selecting their seats. Early in the assignment, I attempted to be available to the thirty auxiliaries within the church. Common sense dictated that I needed to get acquainted with the lay leaders and executive decision makes to advance the mandate of the ministry and fulfill the vision I had articulated.

Additionally, during a series of teaching initiatives with the youth and young adults, (14-28 years old), they made it clear that their church community needed some work. The youth and young adults felt locked out, and without a voice. One countless job of the pastor is to give voice to the muted. I listened attentively to the youth, but later learned how to go with caution.

According to the Deacon Chairperson, the membership of Little Ark was "about 500 members." I had estimated seeing forty to seventy persons on what was considered a "good" Sunday. The requirements for change were evident. However, the wisdom of senior ministers admonished me to observe and evaluate for the first five to seven years. This advice was based on the premise that it takes five to seven years to begin the task as pastor. How in the name of The Holy can one just wait five to seven years? It appeared to me that if I followed this advice, I could end with a trouble free assignment and a

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[29]Ibid., 6.

membership of twenty-five. If I had waited five months, the fifteen youth and young adults would have gone! Besides, in retrospect, during the first eighteen months, I had eulogized twelve members and was already meeting myself coming and going into the office. Waiting can be wise, but there is also a danger in waiting too long to initiate any plan. I remembered my seminary Church Administration class. The professor stressed the importance of beginning like you mean business, or otherwise, when you mean business, you may be the only one.

Ministry and Management

Since I understood ministry to be meeting needs in the scriptural light of Jesus Christ, it was time to work. It was not time just to wait for something to fall from the sky. The need to disciple and develop seekers into servants was urgent! It is understood that it is to the advantage of any leader in a ministry not to work solo. Even Jesus chose disciples. So I asked the Joint Board, which consists of the primary officers of the church, to help this ministry management attempt. This was the correct decision. Obviously, it may not be the best choice of terms in the old, die hard King James Version Bible reading circles to link the term management with a ministry. However, after discussing the story of Jethro and Moses, we made a gigantic leap forward. I was extremely glad to be able to say "us" instead of me. We linked this direct connection between duty, discipleship and devotion to definitive human needs. We transformed old paradigms or developed new approaches to conduct ministries and completely disbanded the incongruent methods. To the extent that the congregation's ministry meets and

marries human maladies, it shows the preparedness to carry out the mandate of the gospel.

In this model, there will be no attempt to delve into every fact or facet of the life of the church nor the failures of the clergy or officers. Although, for the benefit of lessons learned, I will state clearly what did not work and why. Since it is the function of this document to provide a model of community ministries targeted at meeting the needs of the under served members of the community and ultimately the global community, the minister, lay-leaders, officers, auxiliaries, and administrative officers are vital and should be subjected to some stringent scrutiny.

The minister must motivate people and manage her or his leadership roles so that the laity understand the administrative chores that they must give priority. The church's leadership enables the common ground of humanity to rise to the surface, and all people may see in themselves the purpose of a Christ-centered community. This is the glorious future which the faithful servants of Christ are commanded to strive to become a living reality in this life. This is the future hope of the Church. This future is to bring revival to the present by calling us to the repentance from our cultural elitist ways, to Christ's culturally affirming Way. This future demands that we live for one another in a socially reconciled community that witnesses to that future.[30]

The Seer (pastor) for the congregation must be careful in articulating and initiating the visions. It does not matter whether we raise the visions from the sacred

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[30]Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser, Leading the Congregation (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993), 247.

printed pages of scripture, or a column in the local newspaper, "The Free Lance Star." What is important is that we do not threaten or intimidate people. When members are subjected to verbal abuse and mental anguish by the servant-leader, it is just a matter of time before an uprising commences. Firm leadership does not mean dictatorship. I will discuss this later in Chapter four. An approach that weds the wisdom of the pew with the perceived will of God through the servant-leader is probably the best method to use in an aged congregation. In Little Ark, the overwhelming majority of persons attending in 1992 were senior citizens. The ministry to the seasoned members is quite rewarding but is also fraught with opportunities for ministry malpractice. Besides, to discriminate against the elderly contradicts ministry. I have learned that retirees bring vital resources and reservoirs of wisdom to the church. That is, of course, if they are allowed to make their contributions.

Developing a team idea, enables the lay leaders of the congregation to assist in the ministry. The training of laity in pastoral care methods is designed to answer fears, give skills and methods, heighten awareness of the task, and above all instill confidence and conviction that even the most simple acts of caring are commissioned by God. It is a way to assist lay persons in becoming active responders to God's love and provide an easily grasped means for unleashing their love of others. Lay pastoral care training enables all Christians to share in the ministry to which they have been called.[31] The corresponding

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[31]Howard W. Stone, The Caring Church (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 31.

danger in this move is the risk of creating opposing forces and conflicting divisions within the congregation.

Leadership, that is charismatic but lacking in character and substance, will not sustain prophetic power nor the presence of the Holy. This is generally short lived and does not produce growth in either the servant or those persons being served. If one finds that this has occurred, remember, it is always humbling to admit failure. However, humility resembles the role of pastor much more than does arrogance. A good gauge for self evaluation is whether or not trivia finds propellers in the pulpit and takes flight during the preaching moment. The truth of the matter is, people will not stop believing and trusting a leader that is sensitive and sensible enough to say occasionally, "I am sorry."

In the African American Church, we have lauded the servant-leader with prestige, privilege and power that they rarely give to anyone else. While I agree that in most urban settings this is true, it is also true in rural or small town America. Although, leadership has fallen upon difficulties in this country; and understandably so, given the track records and performance profiles of many leaders; and the clergy are no exception. Aside some more than others have exhibited their weakness, this does not negate the awesome responsibility of ministry. In brief, I perceive the task of clergy, and especially the pastor, to be the admirable and industrious responsibility of bringing people together! Community! This is the focus of the scriptures. The story of a searching Savior seeking to reconcile and redeem fallen humanity is what we celebrate. Indeed, people want leaders who can motivate them to volunteer their energies toward a collective effort.

However, such leadership requires vision and courage to lead the organization toward that realization of the vision -- even when the way is uncertain.[32]

In a similar stride, one has to consider the opposing argument, which could postulate that community is chaotic! This project has challenged the congregation so the focus will always be on Christ and not on the leader. Nonetheless, thinking that people will see only Christ is absurd and never see the leadership. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the servant-leader to maintain her or his ego so they follow the mandate of the ministry instead of one's personal agenda. In rural settings, perhaps more than its urban counterpart, failure to ensure a clear focus or proclaim the gospel with power makes the Monday morning grapevine headlines.

Vision denotes the revelation of God's will made through His agents who direct the course of human events. The fatal effect of the absence of such revelation of God's will is confusion and disorder. People feel no reason to go on. They feel hopeless.[33] Similarly, the servant-leader who decides early, to be the sermon instead of just preaching a sermon, can serve as a social change agent. She or he will be the prophetic person performing priestly duty in parishioners' lives. Prophetic ministry thus means addressing concerns and issues in the larger social arena, but equally witnessing to those forces, powers, and principalities which stifle the church from within, thus thwarting the full

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[32]Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser, Leading the Congregation (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993), 16.

[33]Benjamin Greene, Jr., Vision of Hope (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1988), 13.

emergence of the redemptive community.[34] Therefore, although it may be the prevailing norm for pastors to provide the vision for the church, we must take care in the discharge of this detail. Throughout the New Testament, Jesus showed by precept and example that God cares for every human being. No child is too small to escape His concern. Women, and troops of the occupying army -- the Roman centurions -- were not overlooked. Social outcasts, prostitutes and tax collectors heard the gospel. Poor people, who had neither status nor money, were the subjects of Jesus' special ministry. In short, Jesus included everyone in his ministry.[35]

Fortunately, the congregation of Little Ark has prospered from the introduced platform of a ministry. Not all programs have been embraced. About thirty percent of the programs initiated have been accepted or are under consideration. Therefore, I am persuaded that what began as a journey through the Old Testament emphasizing community has helped us better ourselves to do the ministries needed in King George, Virginia. We have adopted the slogan, "think globally and act locally."

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[34]Carlyle Fielding Stewart III, African American Church Growth (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 30.

[35]Benjamin Greene, Jr., Vision of Hope (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1988), 15.

Chapter Three

Theological Foundations

The theology of the servant-leader pastor will influence one's shaping or framing what will become the congregation's understanding of community. Therefore, I will expound and explain my views on the following areas: Anthropology, Christology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology, Pneumatology, and Theology. All attempts at explaining these areas will consider at least three emphases: scripture, tradition and experience.

In the church, theology should be understood as a way to experience God. I think it ludicrous to argue and debate what is proper, without first showing a relevant purpose. Faith, a by-product of one's theology, is realized for managing life among the many contra life realities. In sharing one's theology, whether the subtopics are the same as these included or not, what is important is an awareness of its impact upon a ministry. For example, if an individual practices a high Christology and low anthropology, their sermons will reflect judgement, fire and brimstone, and hell pronounced proclamations from the pulpit. If the understanding of God is such that the experience embodied in the Christ event, underscores the humanity of a deity and does not deify humanity, then the foundation of faith is focused toward bringing God out of human beings. This functions to elevate, develop, and inspire behavioral changes based on divine expectations and God

given abilities. The opposite allows the wretchedness within to prevail over every hint or aspiration to be transformed and reconciled with the highest hope for human life. God must never be man written as the expressed God, but God must never remain so distant that human beings refuse to reflect the truth and beauty that reflects God in the beauty of Holiness and wholeness.

Anthropology

Considering limited experiences, in the field of theology one has to address the scripture and tradition in light of personal living, thinking, questioning and discovering by way of education and revelation. I submit the following view of anthropology.

The development of man's mind has stretched out such that mankind looks at the brokenness and alienation, the destruction and decay and then searches for an answer. Many conclude that anthropology is incomplete without eschatology! Any concern for human origin is also concern for human destiny. Hope is born within the soul, heart or head of people, and theologically, humanity begins the quest of awesome wonder for release and redemption. For the Genesis writer and me - here God enters. The story is so exquisite only a myth can capture the romance that begins in the garden to recover fallen, broken, and bruised humanity. It is at this point that the Israelites deviate from their surrounding neighbors in principle and construct. For Israel and for me, God is a God of justice and recompense, but also a God of grace and love without a limit! So I assert that I do not agree with the point of view that humankind is just a worm and wretch, but rather I share with those whose anthropology is higher than the low worm or wretch! There is much improvement for humankind. But the message of the myth shows

in Genesis that God has taken the work of restoration and eschatological hope into Holy hands and not human hands. I am not suggesting that God will act as an extractor without regard or response from us. Here enters the second Adam, the perfect example of how we can respond. The second Adam, God incarnate, Jesus comes showing that His humanity is impregnated with Divinity. The problem is that, anthropologically, many persons have not given birth to the Divine within nor have we yielded to the call of God saying to us as God did to Adam - "Where are you?"

In concluding, my anthropological idea does not negate persons based on physical features or disabilities. I do not ascribe to the theory that the Imago Dei is concerned with physical appearance, abilities nor disabilities. I have a problem stating that what is considered abnormalities exclude persons from the love of God. Emphatically not! I am also inclined that the whole idea of brow beating persons for their sexual orientation has not considered the evidence of modern science. I am not sure that persons could not be born with a different orientation and the point is - if so, this does not give me or the church the authority to dictate destiny for those and prescribe for them a status of some lower creaturehood. This is an example of what I mean by critical and often gut twisting nerve. Nonetheless, they cannot accept the traditions of the past as the authority for the present without a critical review, not to mention common sense! Therefore, anthropologically, community is the essence of the search for God and God's search for humanity meeting and merging to emulate the creation story before the fall.

Christology

I have taken the scriptural position attributed to John 1:1. I do believe that Jesus is the word of God become flesh.

> The Black Church historically has affirmed the classical christological understanding of the dual nature of Jesus Christ. Not only was Jesus fully human but he also was more than human. Jesus Christ was acknowledged to be savior and redeemer. As such he was believed to be a part of the divine reality of the Godhead. For Black Christians Jesus was that part of the Godhead was accessible to them so they spoke of him as their friend in time of need. He has been referred to as a "rock in a weary land." In the Black Gospel tradition he has been "a doctor in the sick room," "a lawyer in the court house." Jesus is the one who "makes a way out of no way." Black preaching tradition exhorts Jesus as "a shelter in the time of a storm" and "a bridge over troubled waters."[36]

However, I do not accept that Jesus Christ is the only way humanity can experience soteriological community. I view Christ as the perfect and main model of expression of the Divine Intent incarnated. I believe Jesus was born just as I am born. I do not accept all of the claims that centuries of thinkers have placed upon the lips of Christ, and there is clearly no evidence that Christ said such. Some of these postulations cause the notion that Jesus was either born of a virgin or is not Divine. I believe that God can raise redeemers from the wombs of prostitutes. Therefore, the real genius of Christ is the willingness to give Himself to the role of a universal Redeemer. As an itinerant radical, as the gospel writers clearly displayed, Jesus' world view suggests, without equivocation. He was the Messiah spoken of by the prophets. It was indeed the faithful witness of the

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[36]David T. Shannon and Gayraud S. Wilmore, Black Witness to the Apostolic Faith (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 18.

Divine that had so permeated the heart of Jesus for all of the world that crucifixion could not determine His destiny. Jesus had discovered another way to live, not from the outside inwardly, but from the inside outwardly. To be the God-Man was simply to be in total surrender to the Divine order.

The church as a whole agrees that Jesus did have an actual place in history. Some argue what that place was a spiritual or physical nature. I submit that Jesus Christ, as the incarnate of the Awesome One, has given to the world an example of a life of surrender and love. Ultimately, He sacrificed His life.

I argue also, that Jesus was not killed solely because of the sins of the world. Jesus, as a radical revolutionary, upset the systems of his time. Whenever one takes an opposing stance to the system - persecution and crucifixion are the routine recourses employed. This is the reason the theme songs of the redeemers of history are killed at Calvary or Memphis! It is also noteworthy to see in Christ's resurrection that resurrection is not just a possibility, but a certainty. That is why I believe Jesus willingly died to continue to live. Here we are years later celebrating the life Christ gave for us that we might live. What boundless love we share, not just blood of an innocent man shed when God reconciled the world through the Christ's event! What matter of love has the Almighty bestowed upon the world through Christ that we, too, are the children of God. This maybe considered a low Christology, but I find that the opposite makes it utterly impossible for humanity to answer the call coming from the voice of the Creator!

Traditionally, in the African American Baptist Church, we have always viewed Christ as fully God and fully man. Today, we can anticipate the fact that God has, in the

Christ Event, overshadowed such shallow thoughts and attempts to confine the act of the Divine in anyone's native language. It is no greater wonder that the Bible is filled with mythological language, transcendent language.

Experiential, the Christ of faith is just as real to me as the Jesus of history is presented in the gospels. In the Christ we have presented all of the God that we can stand and more. Many testimonies exclaim, "my cup runs over and repeatedly." Is God in Christ? Yes! Is the Christ of faith God? I believe the answer is yes! Jesus, then, represents a way that all persons can come into the knowledge of God for fruitful living. I do not ascribe to the notion that persons who have not publicly proclaimed the name of Christ as their personal savior are automatically lost and condemned to hell. Jesus is, for me, a way to God, not the only way. God can save however Sovereignty desires. I do believe that the best example of salvation is through the Christ event. Nonetheless, I am not so go to hell conscious that my Christology demands that God be only contained, and incarnated in Christ. Yet in the Christ, I behold the glory of the Holy Eternal and recognize the presence of the hope of eschatology - realized eschatology just as the writer of the gospel of John.

How then does all of this relate to community? In the first order, I attempted to show room in my resolution or space enough in my spirit for tolerance and acceptance of difference without requiring assimilation. The clergy whose position and principles are tolerant may not appear to Holy Bible hollerers to be Holy, but in the spirit of the Christ, persons are led and not driven to a collision with the Eternal.

Soteriology

Soteriology relates to the saving work of Jesus Christ and is to be distinguished from the person of Christ. There are those who do not make a distinction. I assert that, as the scripture states, salvation is extended to and accomplished through the sacrificial work of Christ. It is in the Pauline and Johannine constructs; it is suggested that through the atonement of the Christ, salvation is available for the whole of humanity. While I have a deep appreciation for these constructs, I differ in the following manner:

a. I believe the grace act of God extended in the Christ is more the absolute surrender and embrace of love than a suffering sacrificial servant.

b. The idea of Jesus' death on the cross at Calvary was as much a part of the theological construct of Jesus of Nazareth as the legal criminal justice system of that day. In other words, for me, the Christ did not have to be crucified at Calvary to be my redeemer.

c. Jesus lived as through he was the fulfillment of Isaiah's Servant Songs, suffering was viewed as redemptive. This should not be construed as martyrdom to appease egomania.

Soteriology, as viewed in the texts, must consider the cultural context and be subjected to the critical methods, the same as any other doctrine. For example, salvation, for me, does not allow me to feel complete in GOD and impoverished due to my own conspiracy. To be saved cannot be just for the spirit or soul but for the total person. I choose to consider this whole process holistically. On seeing the risen Lord, the disciples rejoiced as Jesus said they would -- "I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice"

(John 16:16-24). The second "Peace to you" functions as a conferral; Jesus gives peace to the community as He promised (John 14:27). A formal commissioning follows: "As the Father has sent me, I also send you." Thus, John links the community to Christ's own ministry, a theme that has been articulated in the so-called high-priestly prayer -- "As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world" (John 17:18).[37]

Subsequently, I am developing the tolerance that suggests that the God of Jesus Christ displayed sufficient love through the life of Christ to embrace and bestow salvation through the excellence of Divine sovereignty. Therefore, to say "that there is no other name by which they can save people," Acts 4:12, other than the name of Jesus must be contextually understood in the context. When this is considered, I can preach boldly, there is no other name according to scripture, but in the actions, I can embrace the brothers and sisters from varied views as the people of "the way."

Ecclesiology

Since ecclesiology has to do with the church's experiential declaration of status as the community of faith, my comments will briefly outline my thoughts on function. I do believe that the vital vehicle that allows the believer to journey to meet God is the church. But for African American people, the church is still the most vitally progressive force in

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[37]David Buttrick, The Mystery and the Passion (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1992), 86.

the life of their communities.[38] I also understand, by faith, the church is not the only vehicle. I have now left part of my historical and traditional under pinning in that I view the church as an invisible and visible entity. The church universal or the invisible church is composed of persons whose names will never appear on the dockets and spreadsheets of many visible churches. One of the purposes of the church is to nurture the people of God, even as their faith is considered their developed strategies for living and survival, so is the church structured and organized. The foolishness that runs rampant between denominations and church organizations is off centered and out of touch with reality. The arguments and bickering over which is proper ad infinitum is preposterous. The commercialization of the church and the structure of many various steering committees and governing bodies might do well to reflect on the scriptural basis for its existence and insistence.

> Each black congregation should develop ways to assess the needs of its constituents and those who live within a certain radius of the church. This will enable the pastor and staff better to understand their ministry context and to address specific community needs. For example, some neighborhoods need to learn how to read, while others may need better access to medical care. Still others may simply need to know that there are people nearby who care about their families and are willing to offer a helping hand.[39]

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[38]Carlyle Fielding Stewart III, African American Church Growth (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 37.

[39]James H. Cone and Gayraud S. Wilmore, Black Theology, Volume two (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 96.

I do not think that the purpose of the ecclesiological enterprise is to subject the notion that only those privileged to participate in the church will be with God or are accepted of the Holy One.

We should not reduce nor casually consider the role of the church regarding faith development and scriptural interpretation. I do not suggest that the only scriptural understanding come from the church. However, I hasten to add - it is the church that sanctions or credentials whatever interpretation that develops. Without the church, the preaching of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ would, in fact, be superfluous.

> The Black Church has always known that the Bible is concerned with religious questions which are never divorced from physical ones. Human beings are to be reckoned as encompassing the totality of existence. Blacks have known this instinctively due to their quest and struggle to survive in the American society. It was out of oppression that God elected and saved Israel. So it has been with the Black Church. As such, Blacks have certain advantages as a consequence of oppression. We are taught to look critically at ourselves as we do at others. We are taught that not only our material and physical security are threatened, but our whole life is at stake.
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> For the African, religion is a way of life. There is not a separation of religion and a way of life. In the Western tradition one worships to celebrate the Almighty. In the African tradition one lives to celebrate the Almighty. That is notwithstanding the fact that many traditional African religions are assumed to have practiced ancestor worship. The fact is that the African, ancestors were the vessels of all earthly wisdom and knowledge.[40]

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[40]David T. Shannon and Gayraud S. Wilmore, Black Witness to the Apostolic Faith (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 37.

The church, accordingly, came into existence within the Divine intent for man to occupy a state of harmony and peace with God. This is one key difference that I have struggled with and have therefore aligned my thoughts again, outside the norm (of catechismic relevancy in the Baptist tradition). For me, the church has always been in the minds of both God and man. It is the church that has cultivated the faith development of people and oriented such toward the Divine. It is the ordering of the Divine aim of God, early expressed in primeval history, that makes the church a necessary organism. So then, the church is one foundation, but that foundation is Theocentric and allows space for all of the people of God. An updated world view that does not allow the whole of humanity access to the Holy only fosters the same fragmentation that has been and continues to destroy the earth and the people of God.

Pneumatology

They have understood the Holy Spirit for centuries to be the force or the essence of Divine activity in happening and becoming. Again, I allude to the creation stories. "The Spirit of God moves upon the face of the waters," is a beautiful description of a discerned understanding that the Spirit functions and moves according to God in a type of God extension fashion. The Old and New Testaments make reference to the Spirit once. Therefore, to assert that the Holy Spirit did not exist before Pentecost misses truth. I conclude that the Spirit of God does dwell in the people of God, but not all persons allow the Spirit to establish their agendas.

What then is the evidence of the Spirit's indwelling? I do not think that any physical manifestation can authenticate Spirit. However, I do believe that the Spirit moves some persons as the Spirit desires, and therefore, to fight and argue over sameness of expression and physical manifestation is further testimony of our innate fractured mentality and our personal need for community.

Experiential, the Spirit is that movement of Divine Splendor in the inner chambers of the core of my being that enlightens and enlivens me to search for the ultimate union with God. It is the Spirit that speaks, leads and guides persons to act and be what would be impossible of themselves. For me, the Holy Spirit is that part of the Divine that gets close to the human predicament of sin and falleness and conveys the compassion of the Divine while also bringing realized redemption. I think that this is what Paul had in mind when he spoke of the Spirit's seal until the day of redemption!

Theology

Scriptural reference for my basic belief in God is not necessary. It is not necessary because God is transcendent and not entirely defined or understood by the writers of the text. Some years ago, I used to believe that if you wanted to understand God and view God - just get the Bible and read God's word. Today, I believe that God revealed of God's self-disclosure in scripture is an important beginning, but not the sum of the quest. The record is replete with many acts attributed to the Divine that I consider to be the act of the nations, governments, rulers and the power players. They show people acting and then hiding behind the face of God so that their actions may go

unchallenged. We are guilty today of saying that God said this or that, as if to be removed from the realm of inquiry and investigation.

Traditionally, for the African-American, God has been, and is, knowable in ways that no theologian perhaps other than Dr. Henry H. Mitchell has penned. I think that we must not underestimate tradition concerning the theological development of persons. For those of us who were nurtured in the bosom of necessity, lack, want and need -- theologically, the "way maker" is God. The profaneness of the world, the desacralization which occurs at the core of human existence and eviscerates a sense of the holy, often anesthetizes people to the reality of God. People are seeking recovery of a sense of the sacred. They want assurance that life has ultimate spiritual value and meaning.[41] Yet, there are those persons whose history and traditions are different and therefore their concept of God varies.

Experientially, my concept and experience of God is that God is existent and intrinsic. God is involved in human history and yet not involved. I find that the God involvement within human history is when people respond and rise to act in the Imago Dei. This is a type of God working within humankind. Yet, God is not involved - not involved is to be understood in the sense that God is not some mechanism that is going to snatch us back from destruction or chaos without regard for our participation.

It was the response of Jesus Christ that was indeed one key factor as the Messiah. The Eternal has summoned all persons anointed by God to respond in similar fashion.

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[41]Carlyle Fielding Stewart III, African American Church Growth (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 61.

This allows me to free myself of the prejudices and dogmatism that for years made me a religious fanatic and a hypocrite. Theologically speaking, I understand God proper as the ultimate expression of good, the creator and nurturer of this world and the world(s) to come. I believe this God to have no respect of the person but available and approachable by any that seek acquaintance. The very fact that humankind concerns itself with falleness is a testimony of the involvement of God in the institution of redemption. The God of my faith has many means and methodologies for accomplishing the redemption of humanity.

I have much more reflecting and investigating to do because the question comes to me - is man the center reference in the concern of God? Just as the psalter - I wonder, what is man . . . Is man the creator of God as my German neighbor suggests? I argue that the quest actually experiences God proper and helps us as we struggle to know ourselves and the mind of the Divine! With emphasis on community - the essence of God is revealed within the confines of communion of the righteous. It is within the faith community that aliens transform from bastards to brothers. This is the eschatological hope of the sacred text - in the words of the Revelation writer, "a new heaven and a new earth!" What an awesome task it is to be custodians of the text and the creators/developers and the theological designers of communities which reflect the Divine!

Chapter Four

Strategic Planning For Vision Concepts

Strategic planning uses the church's historical data, its concentration on the future and proactive application of goals and objectives. Valerie Clark and Kathy Simpson state that strategic planning is a process that:

- Examines where your organization or business is now, where you want to be, and how you are going to get there.
- Involves your community or group in visioning your preferred future.
- Produces a flexible plan or road map of strategies derived from internal discussions and external sources of input.
- Steers your county/region in a focused direction for future success
- Allows proactive thinking beyond your current activities and traditions.
- Deals with change positively by responding to it effectively
- Involves making decisions that consider changes or anticipated changes in the environment.
- Sets priorities for action that are reflective of all aspects of your association or municipally.[42]

The strategic planning process solicits the organization to set up a planning team. Past frames of reference prevented the use of that technique. The servant-leader, especially in the rural context, must be attuned to the impacts of transition. Little Ark

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[42]Valerie Clark and Kathy Simpson, Strategic Planning: Is It For You? by Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (http://tdg.uoguelph.ca.omafra/facts/93-041: 1993), 1.

most recently accepted the ministry of a full-time pastor. As expected of an aging congregation, major shifts in leadership had recently occurred. Most significantly, shortly after my arrival, it was necessary to install another chairman of the Board of Deacons. Before entering this degree program, the Deaconess Board was empowered to serve communion, instead of merely preparing the sacraments.

The associated shift mentally and authoritatively with these changes, alone, proved to be cumbersome and challenging. Setting up a special team to specifically assess the church's needs, formulate "what-if" analysis and, submit recommendations for future direction, may have abrogated the intent of the program. The possible perception that a group was brought in as a "hand picked" cabinet was too delicate and controversial. As a result, I gathered data through mini-brainstorming sessions conducted with each church organization. Joint Board and church meetings set the stage for cross-sectional representation and to elicit owners of the vision. Follow-up sessions were appropriately scheduled for clarification and reiteration of collected data.

The strategic planning process generally encourages the use of a facilitator. Family oriented congregations tend to lean toward external intervention defensively. New members often appear to wear an invisible "outsider" shield, until the adequate trial period is met. Choosing guest ministers requires caution, based on familiarity or pronounced credibility endorsed by the pastor. A facilitator could only be chosen by matching preconceived levels of reception. Often, several visits by the guest minister to regular worship services are necessary to create an acceptable environment. In the rural area, everyone knows everyone. Still considering myself as a "foreigner," I felt

inadequate to select a neutral person from within the community to facilitate. The time constraints associated with "warming" up the congregation to another "foreigner" as facilitator were not conducive to the parameters of this project or the church. Consequently, I served as moderator, facilitator, team leader and servant-leader for planning. Whereas this could be misunderstood as dictatorial, a church possessing family oriented ambiences must wean itself away from what I discern as a "Parental" government to servant-leader recognition. Forcing a rush to change may be more destructive than beneficial. Additionally, as servant-leader, one's attitude must be adjusted to accept that until transition is achieved, he or she may indeed perform all major leadership roles of the church.

In my first and second year at Little Ark, short range plans known as the "Pastor's Goals and Objectives" were established. This outlined a streamlined stratagem to achieve particular aims of improvement. Lacking was an integrated design toward an established vision.

> Visioning allows your planning team to decide how you want your organization to be perceived in the future. Your team will explore what you want to look like in five years, your preferred future, and your values. You will need to gather this information from those you represent or serve.[43]

Little Ark, collectively, became my planning team, through casual conversation, formal meetings, historical trends and unspoken reactions. The community served as validators

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[43]Valerie Clark and Kathy Simpson, Strategic Planning: Is It For You? by Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (http://tdg.uoguelph.ca.omafra/facts/93-041: 1993), 3.

of reports, through historical, current and notable responses. Dr. James Harris, renown theologian, was a catalyst through his interpretation of the concerns of black churches for today's Christ-centered revelation. Though not all inclusive, vision components were recognized.

> The black church recognizes that it cannot afford to remain an isolated institution. It needs to begin to perceive itself as an integral part of the political, social and economic system. Unless the church recognizes this, it will remain a virtually powerless institution in terms of its ability to bring about liberation.[44]

A servant-leader must be prepared to authenticate diligent study with practical application. Dr. Harris pronounced my spiritual intent for the dominant culture present in the Little Ark assembly. The socialization system demonstrated in his black community yields it to be an inclusive religion, although subtle racial barriers promote the principle of exclusion. After the "Colored," one building schoolhouse in King George, Virginia, closed years ago, students were integrated into a predominantly white education system. The Dahlgren Naval Surface Warfare Center accommodates a military standard of simulated freedom for all, and the surrounding community is accustomed to interracial dating and marriage. Therefore, the market seems ripe to enter my aspiration, as indicative of black theology: sharing of liberation beyond the confines of race.

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[44]James H. Harris, Pastoral Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 36.

The next step in the strategic planning process is to develop a mission statement.

> An organization's mission, in tandem with its mandates, provide its raison d'^entre, the social justification for its existence. For a . . . nonprofit organization, this means there must be identifiable social or political needs that the organization seeks to fill.[45]

This is the mission statement of the Little Ark Baptist Church:

Little Ark Baptist Church
is a body of Christians whose primary
mission is to glorify God through the making
of disciples who will love, support and nurture each other;
provide compassionate service to the community; and evangelize the
lost and develop them into self-reproducing disciples.

Step three of the methodology is "Assessing the Current Situation." The servant-leader must be objective when deducing the actual condition of the church's existence. Faulty and insufficient data, biased analysis, hidden agendas, and refusal to desire the truth will result in an inadequate solution and non-executable implementation. Certainly, a neutral source would have complemented this procedure. Unfortunately, in respect of the acceptance factor of outside interference previously stated, my pastoral prerogative to guide through self-assessment was deemed the most beneficial for our environmental assessments. The Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threats (SWOT) method was employed. Using dialectical inquiry and nominal group technique, a swift assessment of Little Ark's strengths and weaknesses was possible. It should be noted that this

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[45]John M. Bryson, Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations. A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1988), 14.

assessment is a critique of the internal and external environments. Internal components comprise the church's profile.

> A strength is a resource, skill or other advantage relative to competitors and the needs of the markets a firm serves or expects to serve. A weakness is a limitation or deficiency in resource, skills and capabilities that seriously impede a firm's effective performance.[46]

I carefully observed the development process as depicted by the Pearce and Robinson text. Though beneficial in overall strategy, consideration was weighed as to whether to formally or informally follow the recommended procedures. Informal was chosen to prevent the backlash of incorporating such a rigid mechanism. As a result the Little Ark strengths and weaknesses were documented.

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[46]Ibid., 176.

Little Ark Baptist Church Partial SWOT
Strengths • Political influence in the community • Dedicated work force; volunteer and paid • Gravitating toward action and innovation • Strong representation by aged and retired community • Excellent citizen participation • Financially stable • Renowned reputation • Settled in the community • Strong ties with vendors and businesses • Excellent representation in the business community • Able to raise short and long range capital • Property and equipment owners • Good rural location • Excellent cross-section representation of occupations • Upper black class "silk stocking" church image • Professional, stable, and free to act management • Anxious for biblical education and procedural training • Willingness to take on new challenges • Availability of servant-leader • Supportive and loyal family generations
Weaknesses • Lack of political awareness • Lack of "Black African American" conceptualization • Organization structure is too flat for a progressive ministry • Insufficient number of consistent volunteers and paid staff • Limited outreach program • Shallow new comers' orientation process • Poor commitment from young people • Poor representation of young people • Little collaboration of auxiliaries • Lack of knowledge in basic Baptist polarity • Suffering education system - No Board of Education • No strategic plan • Poor administrative fulfillment • No financial investment system • Lack of innovative worship service, including the music forum • Lack of organized specialty ministries, singles, young men, etc. • Geographical residence of servant-leader • Lack of support for non-traditional approaches to worship

Fig. 1. Little Ark Baptist Church Strengths and Weaknesses

Developing the second half of the SWOT analysis Opportunities and Threats, was accomplished in the same manner. "An opportunity is a major favorable situation in a firm's environment. A threat is a major unfavorable situation in a firm's environment."[47] The planning focus, therefore, shifted toward evaluating what the community would represent in the immediate future, approximately five years. As a result, focus groups; "...recognized experts and qualified individuals in an organized setting to develop, evaluate, and synthesize their individual points of view on a particular topic"[48] were established. Opportunities and Threats are documented in Figure 3.

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[47]Ibid., 175.

[48]Ibid., 165.

Little Ark Baptist Church Partial SWOT
Opportunities • Organizational and worship service redesign • Music department/Christian education redesign • Outreach development • Special ministries' development • Organized and formal training, seminars • Consolidate special events • Develop church community presence • Provide transportation • Provide and heighten community and political awareness • Servant-leader involvement in community political and financial arenas • Servant-leader community presence • Create an Investment Review Board • Increase collaboration among auxiliaries • Provide alternative worship services • Innovative worship experiences • New community upgrades
Threats • Neighboring church competition (unwarranted) • Social function competition • Family oriented function competition • "Old" regime jockeying for position • Revenue demands generated by increased programs and recent building project • Uncooperative members and lack of follow-through on assignments • Non-support of voted upon decisions by the majority • Naval Base downsizing • Shift of the "Buppie/Yuppie" population away from the Washington Metropolitan Area • Theological shift of the "X" generation from God • Leadership fear of rapid, sudden change and "rocking the boat" mentality • Leadership inability to delegate authority • Inability of the congregation to enhance change to tradition • Loss of membership

Fig. 2. Little Ark Baptist Church Opportunities and Threats

The third component of assessing the current situation is the identification of critical issues. The servant-leader should ensure that after clarifying the church profile, any resulting questions are notated. These issues may require additional research. If so, follow-up teams can be directed to settle them and report periodically until final resolution.

Little Ark Baptist Church Critical Issues List

Spiritual

1. How do we broaden the theological underpinning without disrespecting the people?
2. How do we define freedom of expression?
3. Can we improve the worship service to incorporate freedom of expression for all?
4. How do we promote the ministry without becoming for profit marketeers?

Economical

1. How do we ensure an adequate funding base to fulfill our mission?[49]
2. In what should we invest, which keeps us within the parameters of a nonprofit organization and consistent with our calling?
3. What project upgrades should be undertaken?

Social

1. What special interests' groups exist in the church which need to be addressed? How do we prioritize the emphasis?
2. How can we offer worship service alternatives without jeopardizing spiritual integrity?
3. How can we assist in offering the servant-leader a private life?

Technological

1. How do we include our aging members in the "high-tech" race to year 2000 solutions?
2. How do we tap into, temper, and yet channel the enormous energy of our automation gurus, and earned degree professionals?
3. What are our intents to change from a technologically challenged church?

Managerial

1. What organization structure is optimal for vision and mission accomplishment?
2. Is the church in a posture, where it can complete its vision should she sustain a major shift in leadership position(s)?
3. How can we ensure that all officers are capable of leading within their respective offices?

Fig. 3. Little Ark Baptist Church Critical Issues List

[49]Ibid., 151.

"Two basic outcomes should be sought from this step. The first is a tailored list of the strategic issues faced by the organization. The second is an arrangement of the issues on the list in some sort of order: priority, logic, or temporal."[50]

It is not enough to complete the situational assessment and document the obstacles to the ministry. The servant-leader, coupled with a well-informed church, must ensure that a continuous cycle of fruitful patterns prevails. Otherwise, we distinguish ourselves with Dr. James Harris' definition of empty religion. Empty religion is religion with form and only form.[51] Developing a church strategy substantiates a call to action. The Little Ark Grand Strategies are stated in Figure 4.

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[50]John M. Bryson, Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1988), 140.

[51]James H. Harris, Pastoral Theology, A Black-Church Perspective (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 16.

Little Ark Baptist Church Grand Strategies
Spiritual Concentration and product development: increase the present customer rate, while developing new products. Incorporate a ministry for the total body of Christ. Enhance the spirituality of the congregation within the church, by bridging expectations. **Economical** Concentration and market development: increase the present customer rate, while broadening and attracting different markets. Develop a viable financial program. **Social** Horizontal and vertical integration: In contrast to the traditional definition, our intent is to provide a ministry open to the entire community. Launch a program of ministry that encircles and engages the community with the love ethics of Jesus Christ. Promote corporate-sponsored programs. **Technological** Product development: Develop an appropriate automated system to track and handle the emerging needs of the church. **Managerial** Product development: Develop appropriate organizational structure to assist the servant-leader in normative administration. Develop a complete Christian education department, addressing the total needs of the church. Identify the appropriate ministries not addressed in the church.

Fig. 4. Little Ark Baptist Church Grand Strategies

Chapter Five

Implementation: Planning in Action

I maintain that the visionary leader frames the plan and inspires or initiates methodology. Yet, the implementation phase of the vision or focus must also be carried out. The servant-leader can damage his or her relationship with working teams, by refusing or retarding fruition of the plan. Even the stipulation that this is a "living" document, under review and revision, does not justify placing it on the shelf and refusing to use it as a management tool. I have found that not only in the rural church, but in most churches, a return-on-investment must be visible to promote continued contribution. For most, the church does not provide financial recompense, instead, there must be a spirit, a feeling, a declaration, or an outward sign of added value manifested in their lives. If, therefore, their service in God's house is discounted as a memo filed in a cabinet until ready to discard, where is the depletion of insensitivity, oppression and neglect for which the church strives. Let us then be reminded that the success of the church, especially the black church, is equated with the mere "feeling" of success. It is absolutely imperative that the plan is put to work.

Devising the action plan necessitates as much attention to detail as the other components of the process. In order to put your strategic plan into action it is necessary to:

> Develop innovative approaches to accomplish your strategies;
> Check that your planned activities are consistent with your mission;
> Divide your proposed activities into manageable tasks;
> Include what you will do, who's responsible, what resources are needed, when they will be done, and how you will monitor their progress.[52]

My first difficulty in implementation arose in the attempt to select teams or individuals to develop action plans, perform tasks and follow-up assignments. Inasmuch as there are dynamic personalities in the church, matching similar personalities was a challenge. Fervent prayer, though intangible and undocumented in the formal process of planning, prevailed as the significant proponent of selection. In light of the goals we had designated, I attempted to match seasonal (aged) members with the young entrepreneur as much as possible. The advantage was to achieve optimal proposals; cultivated through promoted dialogue from residential expertise with that of one possessed with a quest for modern and technological excellence. Tension and self-induced stress resulted when I attempted to circumvent any perceived controversy which could arise from my selections. The servant-leader must perform with assurance, while knowing that all in the church will not be pleased. Additionally, the servant-leader must maintain that many decisions will not always be professionally savvy.

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[52]Valerie Clark and Kathy Simpson, Strategic Planning: Is It For You? by Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (http://tdg.uoguelph.ca.omafra/facts/93-041: 1993), 4.

From that spring board, I moved toward electing participants for kingdom building. The first stage was to recruit the willing and anxious. The rural environment fosters at least two types of personalities in regards to work. There are those who work in the city, come home to escape and relax, and even if credentialed will not perform duty in the church. There are those who still project rural to mean work "by the sweat of the brow" attitude and will not stop until all and any work is done. Some associated concerns which arise are: there are the competent among us who shun assignments, and there are those who lack the necessary skills who eagerly await tasks. Then, there are those who are capable, willing, and overworked; and there are those who possess the ability, but require training. As a result of this rationality, stage two was to align needs and talents to provide ministry within the sacred walls (immediate community) for service outside the walls (remote community). If the servant-leader chooses this recourse, patience is of essence for a new dimension of ministry is formed. A team ministry requires an acquainted knowledge with and response to the dynamics of team building: Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing, adapted from Thekman, 1965. An effective team ministry brings active involvement and a myriad of detail and numerous alternatives beneficial to meeting goals and objectives.

Moving toward action required "gap" analysis. Where are we (SWOT)? Where do we want to be (Strategies)? The difference between the two is the gap. How do we get there? Little Ark is still contemplating and working diligently to answer that question. The servant-leader cannot rush the process, but must know when sufficient data has been gathered and the time has come to execute.

Under the Managerial subcategory, the product development grand strategy was established to identify appropriate ministries not addressed in the church. The following examples show three solutions to the probing critical issue and associated with that strategy. With a core group of members, initial data gathering was performed:

1. Survey the congregation
2. Interview target population
3. Survey the outside organizations in the Dahlgren, King George area
4. Interview other churches in the Dahlgren, King George area
5. Review various programs from churches within a 150-mile radius
6. Create a data matrix as assessed from all sources
7. Establish short term and long term capabilities of Little Ark
8. Prioritize and address the Pastor's emphasis
9. Subdelegate results to teams to create action plans

The core group discovered three principal ministries to establish, the singles, young men, and young women. As a result, three project teams were established to compile action plans. The action plans included tasks, time lines, and evaluation methods. The teams (team leader) periodically reported to the servant-leader for approval, concerns and overall status. This resulted in reports to the congregation by way of general business and executive board meetings. The servant-leader must remember that communication while operating a project is very important. Teams unmonitored and/or servant-leaders unavailable for guidance can prove costly in scheduled resources, and organization support. Overruns in the budget and duration can be avoided by programmed and timely feedback. Additionally, one product of open and constant communication is a smooth transition.

Two programs were successfully implemented after entering this degree program. The Brothers United Moving in the Spirit, "B.U.M.S.", program is geared toward

mentoring young males. The "Singles'" program was created for unmarried individuals in the congregation. Both were scheduled for a formal service evaluation, since they were developed over one year ago.

B.U.M.S.

The name B.U.M.S. was designated by the youth (young men) in the community. The program provides the opportunity for them to interact with adult mentors benefit from positive role modeling. The mission of the program is to develop greater self-esteem in the youth. This is performed by providing conflict resolution skills essential for solving problems in daily activities, enhanced problem solving skills, and techniques to improve academic abilities.

Structured sessions focus on career, "world of work", skills, training and various topics that relate to the youth experience. Organized field trips are taken to work sites and cultural locations which provide exposure that will enhance the social development of young men. These real-life experiences encourage the practical application of the skills outlined during the joint and one-on-one mentor meetings. The chart in Figure 5 defines the goals and objectives of B.U.M.S.

B.U.M.S. Goals and Objectives
- Provide mentorship, positive role models, and appropriate guidance.
- Increase opportunities for the youth to develop critical thinking and conflict resolution skills related to their academic and social pursuits.
- Improve participation and performance in mathematics and science through reinforcement of problem solving skills.
- Enhance positive self-esteem and sense of responsibility through group and individual interactions and community service projects.

Fig. 5. B.U.M.S. Organized Goals and Objectives.

The organization generated a sense of warm harmony among the youth and mentors. Fellowship between community churches was given a challenge by this effort. The program cited at least fourteen accomplishments, several of which were elevated to major strengths. In the critical review, three weaknesses were discussed. There is an inability to get a significant number of male county residents to serve as mentors. There is a lack of mass participation in the community from the youth and adults. Success factors are high, but there is no formal measurement criteria to determine "real" quality or quantifiable results. The group developed five strategies to improve the weaknesses:

- Get adults without siblings involved in the program.
- Conduct more activities involving adults and youth.
- Expound on the benefits that the community could derive from this program.
- Do a better job of convincing non-participating parents/ guardians/youth on the virtues of positive exposure and networking.
- Continue with a publicity blitz in the community.

The B.U.M.S. ministry is an example of how the servant-leader must know when periodic presence is sufficient for the program to survive. The ability to acknowledge that a program is self-sustaining fears up time for more needed ventures.

Singles' Ministry

The Little Ark Singles' Ministry mission is to:

> open the door of friendship and minister to the needs of singles through biblical teaching, Christian fellowship, seminars, retreats, discussions and other actions; to strive to come together in Christian love and serve as a source of positive affirmation and living positively as a Christian single.

The ministry was determined to provide an emotional release and comradeship for singles living as Christians. Activities range from attending and sponsoring gospel concerts, bowling, and shopping extravaganzas, to serving the various needs of our senior citizens. All activities are open to the general public but concentrated on the singles' experience. This program has received many accolades. It provides a session for single expression and relaxed relationships. It is a great change from the highly taunted official and formal that characterizes Little Ark Baptist Church. It was structured to incorporate spiritual ministry. The program leader is proficient in project execution. The sponsored activities were well coordinated and supported.

Yet, the Singles' program is not fulfilling its functioning capability. An informal critical review showed that implementation was and is difficult. Several weaknesses were documented. The ministry has a low profile in comparison with other programs.

The participants seem to reject the connotation associated with the title "single." There is little ownership of the program. There is no membership growth. Result: program leaders are frustrated. Several strategies are plausible, but further examination of the Singles' Ministry is necessary. Alternatives are to increase the power of presence by the pastor and key officials, provide more religious oriented options and/or invite professional counselors to address the social and psychological trade-offs. The servant-leader must be sensitive enough to notice warning signs of the impending death or termination of a project.

Within the gospel church, social functionality is not enough to sustain liberation. Application of the kerygmatic nature is necessary. The need for a young women's program was originally accomplished through researching other churches and civil organizations. During the review of community services available, we freely shared our intent. The concept was identified as a definite need and the concept undertaken by a community resource. In cooperation and with the desire for fulfillment, I ensured that a church representative was present at a start up meeting and, if necessary, a member of the project team. It is necessary that if the servant-leader is sincerely concerned about a totally effective ministry in the community, he or she realizes that one church cannot do it all. Yet, the servant-leader must be persistent that the church's vision is realized. It may not be realized in the exact fashion or expected time-frame, but certainly, the objective must be rendered. If not, the servant-leader and church should find it necessary to revisit their plan. This is the circumstance with the young women's program. We are not satisfied with the approach, or the response received through the existing program.

Therefore, it is necessary for Little Ark to consider another approach. Our dilemma is whether to work this critical issue within the framework of Little Ark's proposal or assist in reorganization of the existing program.

The strategic planning has broaden my ability to govern the church. The process has heightened my awareness of the responsibility of spiritual and church management. With the proper combination of both, success is within reach. I have learned more and more that the Change is constant. Therefore, the needs of the church, community both collectively and individually will change. As these changes occur, the strategic plans will change. The servant-leader must be responsive to change and prepare to revisit plans and create solutions.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

In 1992, the average worship attendance was fifty. The service times were posted as 9:45 a.m. for church school and worship began at 11:30 a.m. Before worship was a thirty minute devotional program. During this time, testimonials, prayers, and hymns were conducted by members of the congregation. Usually, the deacons dominated this segment of worship. These devotionals were so listless, they portrayed the futility and fruitlessness of formality. Obviously, changes or transformation were urgently required. Many of the younger members would sit in their automobiles and wait until this period ended, and the call to worship was inaugurated. As an incoming pastor, it is important to proceed with caution. However, this increases the risk to the congregation instead of revitalizing the church. I could not wait longer than one year, and I think that was too long. I understood the impact upon the life of the church worship encompassed. Both corporate (public) and personal (private) worship are vital to the ongoing life of a church in general and the worshiping community in particular. Worship is basically person-centered -- a creative encounter between God and persons.[53] So, the devotional period

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[53] Melva Wilson Costen, African American Christian Worship, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 91.

was shortened to 15 minutes unless the move of the Spirit dictated otherwise. This change was welcomed and the congregation valued the time to share in corporate worship more than ever. This minor motion helped us move closer toward openness and embrace each other. A sense of wholeness is facilitated when worshipers can bring all that they are to the beloved community and know that they will be appreciated and affirmed.[54]

As stated earlier, the rural church has a way of becoming established, stabilized and stagnant. I would diagnose our situation as stale and quickly becoming stagnant. The church must constantly evaluate its process for determining needs to be sure that it is designing ministries not to meet its own needs, but to meet the real needs of all people. It is easy for a congregation to become inwardly focused so that its ministry is just to keep the congregation alive.[55] Beyond a doubt, we were preserving a rich heritage, but we were not equipping persons for the nineties, not to mention the 21st Century.

To date, any Sunday morning prior to devotional service concluding, the sanctuary has more than quadrupled to approximately fifty congregants who attended in 1992. The number of persons now present during this hour, is an achievement. The average attendance is 220 per Sunday. Although in a vision statement written to the church in November 1995, I stated that we anticipated 800 members with 500 actively participating, I am excited. I am determined to strive for focus and flexibility and simple, but concrete and concise communication of vision, programs and transformative ministry

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[54]Ibid., 78.

[55]John Ed Mathison, Tried & True (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1992), 66.

within the sanctuary. Countless churches throughout the country have established magnificent programs to benefit the congregation and community, but a major obstacle is the inability to communicate information about those programs.[56]

Today, the congregation is free to express themselves in the business sessions. Previously, only certain power brokers were privileged to address issues and concerns. I have instituted a change in the business meetings. They have been curtailed to bi-annual sessions. This validates in no small measure, that the congregation does view the present leadership as that of a servant-leader and not Sovereign Lord.

The Little Ark Baptist Church has increased in attendance, financial assets and people programs. It continues to be a leading church in the community. It is recognized as a multi-ethnic caring congregation. The youth programs have grown through various initiatives that range from reading and tutorial programs to singing and community outreach work programs. Converts and persons who were not active in the ministry of the church are not providing key leadership as teachers, mentors, deacons (male and female). We have transformed the congregation into a more inclusive, caring community within the walls. This has fueled our efforts to fulfill the Great Commission.

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[56]Carlyle Fielding Stewart III, African American Church Growth (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 127.

Annotated Bibliography

Achtemeier, Elizabeth. Creative Preaching Finding the Words. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980.
This work engages the reader and challenges the practitioner of preaching to hone her or his homiletical skills. She underscores the real purpose of preaching: "the release of the active word of God to do its judging and saving work."

_____. Preaching About Family Relationships. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987.
This book provides an array of sources and sermon starters targeted to remove or at least release the hold of silence in the pulpit, relative to family concerns. The author deals with the often unspoken and unproclaimed Word in areas where the communal concerns of the congregation experience much pain.

Akbar, Na'im. Chains and Images of Psychological Slavery. Jersey City, NJ: New Mind Productions, 1991.
The area of concern that relates to community is discussed by the author in great detail. Dr. Akbar asserts that the entire enterprise of slavery has left scars and devastation upon and the within the mentality of the Africans in the diaspora.

Asante, Molefi Kete. Afrocentricity. Trenton: Africa World Press, 1988.
It is an inimitable work that challenges the structures and systematics that influence and therefore hinder freedom for people of color and the African in particular. Relative to community, the author challenges the very foundations of power in chapter two and encourages strength and intellectual development as core to liberation.

Barclay, William. Introducing The Bible. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972.
This book, in my opinion, is the passport for all would-be sailors daring to chart a course in the sacred text. Entry into the domain of the Divine is provided through the insight of the author. Any person challenging, confronting and seeking to shape community must wrestle with the truths and concepts of the ancient history of the Divine-Human encounter as revealed in scripture.

Battle, Michael A. The African-American Church At Work. St. Louis: Hodale Press, 1994.
This book provides a fairly in-depth look at the community based ministries of some of the leading churches in the African-American community.

Brueggemann, Walter. The Prophetic Imagination. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1987.
Walter Brueggemann shows how the office of the cleric or prophetic voice challenges community through offering alternative imaginations.

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Faith and obedience is shown to be the primary objective of knowledge. The author demonstrates for the reading audience how the Old Testament religious society used the Word as the catalyst for change! In this work, a helpful tool for those whose objectification of ministry as an agent of and for social change.

_____. A Social Reading of the Old Testament. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.
This work deals with the prophetic approaches to Israel's communal life.

_____. Finally Comes the Poet. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989.
The author pulls the character of God, according to the text, into coexistence with the conditions of people.

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James I. McCord, President of Princeton Theological Seminary summed adequately the contents of this work, - "Calian believes that the pastoral task can be reshaped as the minister takes seriously the responsibility for being a grass-roots theologian, one who has personal faith, integrity, and direction."

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This work is the product of three well known African-American pastors: Harold A. Carter, Wyatt Tee Walker and William A. Jones, Jr. It's central focus is the African American Church's influence upon the lives of it's members and the effects upon society to promote change and conformity to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Clark, John Henrik, and ben-Jochannaan, Yosef. New Dimensions in African History. Trenton: Africa World Press, 1991.
In this book, the reader is challenged to expand beyond the Eurocentric modality of religious relativism. The authors seek to validate the precedent and the cadence of African heritage in religious emphasis and religions around the globe.

Crawford, Evans E. The Hum: Call and Response In African American Preaching. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995.
This is an analysis of African-American folk preaching by a scholar whose wealth of knowledge and exposure to the premier pulpiteers of this generation. Dr. Crawford does not leave the mistaken notion that subverts and subjugates the folk preacher to being simply an ecclesiastical entertainer. Call and response is at the center of community worship, especially in the Black Church. This author does more than analyze and critique but challenges to ensure substance that is worth of celebration, is in the sermon.

Crockett, Joseph V. Teaching Scripture From An African-American Perspective. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1991.
The author outlines how the scriptures are viewed in the African-American tradition. Culturally and socially, the traditions of Africans have been subjugated and viewed as invalid. The author draws on a variety of sources - biblical, philosophical, and literary, to accent the different but credible teaching methods that dominate the African-American church community.

Dale, Robert D. Pastoral Leadership. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992.
A good book about the dynamics involved between the clergy and the congregation. It is a well written and thought provoking book that offers a critique of the clergy and her or his leadership style.

Davis, Kortright. African Creative Expression of The Divine. Washington, D.C.: Howard University School of Divinity, 1991.
Kortright Davis and Elias Farajaje-Jones illumine the reader to the many ways that African tribalism and religion have left its indelible imprint upon much of the African-American communities of today.

Duke, Robert W. The Sermon as God's Word. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980.
After a brief introduction, the author focuses on five major theological traditions he considers most influential in fashioning the pulpits of the twentieth century-neo-orthodoxy, existentialism, liberalism, fundamentalism, and black liberationist.

Ellison, John Malcus. They Who Preach. Richmond: Virginia Union University, estimate 1955.
A must for all preachers in my opinion. Dr. Ellison sets tone and parameter for the proclaimer of the kerygma. Interested in the rural and the urban and effective equally in both, the author deals candidly with "the task of telling the story."

Felder, Cain Hope. Stony The Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.
Cain Hope Felder is the editor of this work. It has some of the most profound scholars of this era. The thesis asserts the myriad ways that the text and the custodians of the faith create and or influence community.

_____. Troubling Biblical Waters: Race, Class and Family. Maryknoll: Orbis Press, 1989.
The author challenges the theological underpinnings of Christendom by asserting the myriad contributions by Africans in the diaspora. Further, Cain Hope Felder suggest that the entire world is drawn into community or family through the reconciliatory work of redemption done in Christ. Community relations beyond blood relationships is the highest calling to the church in these times.

Forbes, James. The Holy Spirit & Preaching. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989.
In this work, the author emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit in preaching. I quickly suggest in the same interest of the author, such work is not dynamics at the expense of mechanics nor the reverse. The anointing, according to the author, is that driving force that steadies the preacher on course to challenge and change for Jesus' sake.

Greene, Benjamin. Vision of Hope. Valley Forge, Judson Press, 1988.
This compilation of valuable writings all center around the influence that church has in the community as well as the mandate to perform ministry.

Hanson, Paul D. The People Called. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986.
This book is encyclopedic in its scope. It traces the notion of community throughout the ancient text.

Harbaugh, Gary L. Pastor as Person. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984.
Within the frame work of the church's work over against the work of the church, the clergy person may loose herself and find himself too involved with others and out of touch with self. The author exposes some of the likely pits in which clergy may become imprisoned. He discusses the person and not just "the pastor."

Harmon, Nolan B. Ministerial Ethics and Etiquette. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992.
The title says it all! The author brings a freshness to the truths many clergy persons would rather delay dealing with.

Harris, James Henry. Pastoral Theology: A Black-Church Perspective. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.
This work continues in the tradition of Black Liberation Theology introduced in print by Dr. James Cone. James H. Harris asserts the foci of the agenda of the church and the stand of the minister to remain faithful to the task of community based kingdom work.

Hately, B. J. Telling Your Story and Exploring Your Faith. St. Louis: CBP Press, 1985.
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King, Martin Luther, Jr. Stride Toward Freedom. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1958.
A classic about community reform and change caused by a concern clergy person whose reputation borders on the brink of deity.

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Duke University Press, 1993.
This work includes the interviews of over 1800 Black clergy in both rural and urban settings.

Mandela, Nelson R. Long Walk To Freedom. Boston:
Little, Brown and Company, 1994.
The autobiography of Nelson Mandela serves as a source of inspiration and education for all persons whose ambition and drive is centered in sacred service toward community-world community.

Massey, Floyd, Jr. Church Administration in the Black Perspective. Valley Forge:
Judson Press, 1976.
Samuel Berry Kenny teams up with Floyd Massey to suggest for the reading audience some of the particularities of Black Church administration. A standard for nearly two decades.

Mitchell, Henry H. Celebration and Experience in Preaching. Nashville:
Abingdon Press, 1990.
A moving work that is invaluable to all whose aim and agenda is to proclaim a powerful word without reducing the story of the gospel to a performance of ecclesiastical entertainment.

_____. Preaching for Black Self-esteem. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.
Another moving work by the author along with Emil M. Thomas. Meaningful for community oriented ministry in many ways.

Nouwen, Henry J. The Wounded Healer. New York: Doubleday, 1990.
The author offers answers to the question: "what does it mean to be a minister in contemporary society."

Proctor, Samuel D. Preaching About Crises In The Community. Philadelphia:
Westminster Press, 1988.
A tremendous resource for any person and especially preachers who are concerned about the crises and resolution through theological interpretation and intervention.

_____. The Certain Sound of the Trumpet. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1994.
A book designed to make clear the sermon and to make clear to the preacher the purpose of preaching with intensity and insight. I include it because it is the preaching of the gospel that gives the power and vision that will effect and or affect social change.

Roberts, J. Deotis. A Philosophical Introduction to Theology. Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991.
A book that provides the basis and basic understanding of philosophical thought. A connection is made between theology and philosophy in a minister that I consider to be synthetic.

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